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ABSTRACT

This issue is designed to provide delegates and other participants in the New York State Governor's Conference in 1990 and the White House Conference on Library and Information Services in July 1991 with an overview of the current status and future needs of libraries and librarianship in the state. Following a message from Mario Cuomo, Governor of New York, the issue presents the following reports: (1) "Steps into the 1990s" (Richard C. Wade); (2) "The Idea of a Library in 2001" (Thomas J. Galvin); (3) "Library and Information Services for Productivity" (Robert Kraushaar and Barbara Beverley); (4) "Libraries, Literacy, and the Information Society" (Helen Huguenor Lyman); (5) "The Library As a Source of Civic Literacy" (Stephen L. Schechter); (6) "Access" (Patricia Glass Schuman); (7) "Saving Our Vanishing Past" (Carole F. Huxley); (8) "Managing Technology for Today's Library Services" (Teresa Strozik); (9) "Government Information Policy for the 1990s" (Sharon S. Dawes); (10) "Libraries and Learning" (Timothy S. Healy); (11) "Library Services and Programs in Public Libraries" (Bruni Verges); (12) "Library Users" (Andrew Geddes); (13) "Staffing" (Janet Steiner); (14) "Collections" (Kathleen Garland); (15) "Library Facilities" (Elaine Cohen); (16) "Who Makes Decisions on Library Services?" (Roberta G. Cade); (17) "Funding for Libraries in New York: A Primer" (Patricia Mautino); (18) "Public Library Services to Rural People" (Bernard Vavrek); (19) "Neighborhood Libraries in 1998: A Futuristic View" (Stanley A. Ransom); and (20) "A 1990s View of Library Systems" (Robert Wedgeworth). Also included in this issue are: "Public Library Services for a Diverse People: The Roles of Federal Government"; "Twelve Years Ago"; and "Regents Advisory Council on Libraries Report to the Board of Regents Cultural Education Committee, May 24, 1990." (SD)

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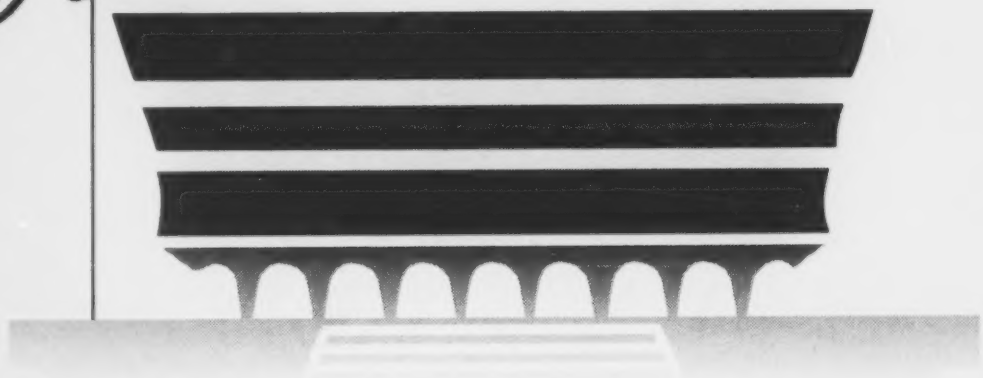

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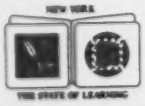

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# CONFERENCE BRIEFS

In his 1989 State of the State Message, Governor Cuomo said he would call a Statewide Conference on Library and Information Services in 1990 to precede the July 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services. The New York State Governor's Conference includes 11 regional conferences on August 28 and a statewide conference in Albany, November 28-30, 1990. The themes for both the State Conference and the White House Conference are library and information services for democracy, for literacy and for productivity.

Delegations to both the New York State and national conferences will be composed not only of library and information professionals but also of supporters of libraries, elected and appointed government officials and members of the general public who are interested in libraries but have no current involvement other than perhaps holding a library card or paying taxes that support their libraries. Indeed, the majority of the delegates will not be librarians.

This issue of *The Bookmark* provides delegates and other participants with information they will need regardless of their current level of involvement with libraries. These articles also should be of interest to faculty and students in schools of library and information science because they provide an excellent overview of the current status and future needs of libraries and librarianship in New York State.

This issue begins with a message from Governor Cuomo and a preface by Richard C. Wade, Chair of the Governor's Commission on Libraries. This issue contains nine essays on the major issues confronting the Governor's Conference. These include: The Role of Libraries in Society Today and Tomorrow (Thomas J. Galvin); Library and Information Services for Productivity (Robert Krauschaar and Barbara Beverley); Libraries, Literacy and the Information Society (Helen Huguenor Lyman); The Library as a Source of Civic Literacy (Stephen L. Schechter); Access (Patricia Glass Schuman); Preserving and Conserving Library Information Resources (Carole F. Huxley); Automation and Technology (Teresa Strozik); Government Information Policy for the 1990s (Sharon S. Dawes); and Libraries and Learning (Timothy S. Healy).

A special report, "Ten Dimensions of Library Service Today," contains 10 longer articles on various services performed by libraries in New York State. This report includes articles on: public library services and programs (Bruni Vergés); library users (Andrew Geddes); library staffing (Janet Steiner); library collections (Kathleen Garland); library facilities (Elaine Cohen); decision making on library services (Roberta Cade); library funding (Patricia Mautino); rural library services (Bernard Vavrek); future neighborhood libraries (Stanley A. Ransom); and a view of library systems (Robert Wedgeworth). Finally, we include a statement on the Federal roles in public library service and the May 1990 report of the Regents Advisory Council on Libraries.

Twenty knowledgeable and talented authors have provided a wealth of information and provocative and challenging issues and questions. These authors represent a wide variety of fields and expertise. Six came from outside librarianship. Five are library educators. Four represent public librarianship. Others come from the Division of Library Development, academic libraries, school libraries, special libraries and the 3R's, and one is a publisher/librarian.

I am indebted to them for their willingness to make these contributions on a very short notice. We are all grateful to them for sharing their knowledge and expertise with us and with the delegates to the Governor's Conference on Libraries.

George S. Bobinski

George S. Bobinski

**This issue of *The Bookmark* was edited by George Bobinski, Dean of the School of Information and Library Studies at the State University of New York at Buffalo and member of the Governor's Commission on Libraries. Dean Bobinski and his authors provide us with a remarkable collection of articles and reports for use by all concerned with the 1990 New York State Governor's Conference on Libraries.**

**Participants in the 1990 Governor's Conference on Library and Information Services may also find helpful articles in such recent issues of *The Bookmark* as those "Outreach Services" (Summer 1988), "Serving Business in an Information Economy" (Fall 1988) and "Libraries in the Tradition of Freedom of Expression" (Winter 1989). For an historical perspective, Conference participants will be interested in the Fall 1978 issue, "Library Systems Conference Papers," with articles prepared for the 1978 library systems and Governor's conferences.**

Joseph F. Shubert

**Joseph F. Shubert**

# A MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR CUOMO

STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

MARIO M CUOMO
GOVERNOR

New York leads the nation in understanding the complexities of functioning in a global competitive society. We are a mosaic of cultures and populations, from New York City to our smallest community. New York also leads in our concern for all the people in our society -- the family of New York. In today's world, information is important to everyone who works, makes personal decisions, votes and otherwise participates in government. Most of all, information, literacy and learning are the basis for our understanding and working with one another.

I therefore have called the New York State Governor's Conference on Library and Information Services to enable people young and old, from every community in New York State, to help make public policy on library and information services. Our Conference will focus on library and information services for the literate, productive and democratic society we want in our state.

The August 28 Regional Conferences and the November Conference in Albany offer all New Yorkers an opportunity to assess today's library services against our needs for information into the 21st Century. The decisions you make at the Conference and the actions that arise from your discussions will affect public policy, support and direction of library and information services in New York during the 1990's and beyond.

In addition, I hope that the Conference and work of the Governor's Commission chaired by Richard Wade will cause more people to take advantage of the services of our libraries.

Sincerely,

Mario M. Cuomo

# STEPS INTO THE 1990s

*By Richard C. Wade, Distinguished Professor of History,*
*City University of New York,*
*and Chairman, The Governor's Commission on Libraries*

New York State libraries, once the nation's flagship, are now engulfed in a creeping catastrophe. Public funding for libraries, once generous, is now static. The consequences are already everywhere evident. There have been no increases in State aid, even to meet inflation, for the past four years. Some school libraries are closed; others have cut back hours; staffs have been pared down; maintenance of buildings and collections have been deferred; purchase of needed equipment has been postponed; any planning for the future seems almost utopian. Worse still, a public that depends on these resources finds them more difficult to use and confidence in their future availability is eroding. And no part of this extensive network of civilized services is immune — not public libraries; not the school libraries; not the academic libraries; and not the specialized libraries. To endanger this matchless heritage would betray those who built it and deprive those who should inherit it.

This library crisis comes at just the time that the need for services has never been greater. Reading scores in schools scarcely improve; dropout rates remain intractably high; and one out of every five adults is functionally illiterate. A new generation, marinated in television, accustomed to the evanescent and seeking quick gratification finds less and less use for what many of them perceive to be the old-fashioned library as merely a place of books and quiet amidst a frenetically changing society. Meanwhile, the world of work relentlessly asks for more credentials for more skills, for more information. The decade of the 1990s and the century that stretches beyond are going to require a highly literate people to accommodate the accelerating electronic revolution of our time.

In creating this literate society, libraries play a critical role. They always have. For more than a century, librarians have helped prepare successive generations, especially those from abroad, for entrance into America's main stream. They have been uniquely, with the schools, the staging grounds for upward mobility. Here the language was learned, the culture absorbed, the "high tech" of each age made available. And made available to all. People come from all parts of the globe — an extravagantly rich mixture of races, religions and languages and they find in libraries a window on their new world and the tools to function in it.

The most recent demographic changes have brought new demands on the library`s historic role. The last quarter century has witnessed a stream of immigration that approximates the numbers of nearly a century ago. These newcomers come from lands with different cultures, different languages and different skills. For the children, schools are their first exposure to American life and values; for adults libraries are the only entry into their new culture. The wide and free use of libraries eased the transition of successive waves of European immigrants into America's main stream. They continue to perform this essential task.

New York's libraries are, however, more than just homes for the newcomer. For generations they have been places where the elderly, seeking to enrich their autumn years, can safely go; they are havens for children — rich and poor alike — who seek help for school assignments or whom imagination reaches beyond the formal curriculum; they are information sites for people in all walks of life who need to know more for self-improvement or idle curiosity, and they contain the wide range of ideas that the educated citizen can consult in making judgments on the central issues of the day. In short, libraries are not merely amenities; they are an integral part of this nation's culture.

And libraries are no longer for books alone. Through they remain the repositories of the world of print, they have also adopted the new technologies of the present. Materials once confined to the printed page are now available in other forms — microfilm, microfiche, video, cassettes, pictures, posters, braille, records and numberless new techniques that have characterized the electronic revolution in an informational society. In addition, new communication allows various libraries to share resources and services. Even some of the newest and most sophisticated material and information are available in nearby libraries and freely available to all.

New Yorkers, accustomed to the best and most advanced systems, have always taken libraries for granted. They can no longer. Rising costs to keep up with the new technology, the shortage of trained personnel, buildings that have inevitably aged and the demands of accommodating the latest wave of newcomers have strained to the breaking point the libraries' limited resources. State and Federal governments struggle with limited reserves and too often find that the easiest place to cut in the budget is the

line that reads "Library and information services." Still too many public officials consider libraries marginal rather than central as amenities rather than necessities. For four years in this State, appropriations have not even covered the increase in inflation. Let us be clear about it: a venerable institution is in jeopardy and without public support and political support will we will fritter away one of our most precious legacies.

It is to examine and address this crisis that Governor Mario Cuomo has appointed a Commission on Libraries. The Commission is not comprised of experts, though there are some, or of professional librarians, though there are some, but of public members and officials who will solicit advice from all our citizens, hold hearings throughout the State and report their findings to the governor at the end of this year.

Benjamin Franklin said to the Constitutional Convention on its last day "gentlemen, you have a Republic, if you can keep it." We have great libraries, if we can keep them.

## Kennedy on Preservation

It was in that New York Public Library branch where I found myself at a dead end of crumbled pages that I turned to other periodicals of the day, *The Daily Mirror* for one, and struck gold. The subject was the underworld of the 1920s and very early 1930s and I had already exhausted all that *The New York Times* and *New York Herald Tribune* and assorted magazines of significance had to say on the pressing aspects of my subject. I had done the bulk of my research in the State Library at Albany and went to New York because the *News* and *Mirror* were not on file in Albany, either in microfilm or bound volumes. These newspapers were tabloids, flashy, raunchy sheets lacking in respectability. In the New York Public I also looked for the *New York Graphic*, the sleazy rag of the mid-1920s where Walter Winchell, for one, peeped the first keyhole, hoping to track my subject into its slimiest depths. But the *Graphic*, also, was not on file even in New York. At least that is what I was told at that time.

Even by literate underworld figures who survive into the present day, it was said more than once to me that of all the press coverage of the nefarious doings in those bad old days, *The New York Times* was usually the most accurate. The tabloids were fast and loose with words, faster and looser with the facts.

And yet the tabloid coverage of criminal events, their biographies of criminal life, were in their own way as valuable as the vaunted authenticity of the *Times* coverage. For the tabs entered regions where the *Times* never trod. The tabs courted the gunmen, the bootleggers, the dizzy dolls and chorines, bought their memoirs, picked their alleged brains, pumped them dry. And what they left us that the *Times* and *Tribune* did not is a report on our society at dreg level, an awareness of slime and how it oozes, a tough-talker's odyssey of life among the dead-shrewd moral cretins who helped shape the underside of our contemporary civilization.

The *Times* and the *Trib* would not, could not stoop to such coverage. It would have violated too many proprieties and precepts by which the elitist press lived and lives. But because the press lives that way is not sufficient reason for libraries to live that way.

Consider the case of *The Village Voice*. Here was one of the earliest of the underground newspaper, a midwife for early versions of the modern journalism that flowered in the 1960s. Here we heard the early voices of Allen Ginsberg, Norman Mailer, Jack Kerouac, Lorraine Hansberry, John Cage. The paper opened up the four-letter vulgate to newspaper readers. It was reporting on what is now called Off Broadway when the *Times* was not going below 41st Street to review a play. It was analyzing the drug culture and rock music when the elitist press was still trying to decide whether it liked Elvis Presley.

— *Getting it All, Saving it All, Some Notes by an Extremist...* prepared by William Kennedy (a position paper for the 1978 New York State Governor's Conference on Libraries, March 1978).

# THE IDEA OF A LIBRARY IN 2001

*By Thomas J. Galvin, Professor,*
*School of Information Science and Policy,*
*Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy,*
*The University at Albany [NY]*

*The library to me was a cathedral of the mind.* — Senator Jacob Javits at the 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Services.

Like the decennial census of the population, White House Conferences on Library and Information Services and the state conferences that precede them are hardly an everyday occurrence. The 1990-91 state and national conferences will be only the second time in history, and the first time in more than a decade, that community leaders, library supporters and information professionals gather to identify citizen information needs and to develop state and national agendas for library and information services in the decade ahead.

"Forecasting," observes the irrepressible Doelger, "is a difficult thing, especially when it deals with the future." And "vision," one might add, "is most commonly achieved in hindsight." Yet the challenge to the delegates to the 1990 New York State Governor's Conference is precisely this: to forge a shared vision of the future information environment for the Empire State and all of its citizens, in their rich diversity and in their infinite variety.

I suggest a framework for thinking about the "library" in the year 2001, when our successors will be packing their suitcases for the Third New York State Governor's Conference on Library and Information Services.

Our State, our nation and all the industrialized nations of the free world have undergone a profound change over the last 30 years. The last quarter of the 20th century has been a time of dramatic transition from a manufacturing-based society to a world economy with its social order centered on services — services that, in turn, depend on data and information. The basic currency of the post-industrial society is information, just as the central focus of the manufacturing society was the conversion of raw materials into finished goods. Electronic information technology (particularly computer and telecommunications technology) is to our generation what the internal combustion engine and the open hearth furnace were to our parents' generation.

The evidence is compelling. Information and data now constitute 25 percent of all world trade (about $50 billion a year). The information and service sector of the U.S. economy has grown to nearly 70 percent of total annual U.S. nonagricultural output, while the goods sector (manufacturing, mining, construction) has declined to only 30 percent. Information workers now represent nearly 70 percent of all the hours worked in the United States. The primary information sector currently accounts for more than half of the combined U.S. and Western European Gross National Product.

The expense side of the information economy ledger is equally impressive. Over 50 percent of all U.S. capital investment is now in information technology. The annual cost of processing information for the Executive Branch of the Federal Government alone is approaching $30 billion. The Federal Government spends $6 billion a year just on information dissemination, not counting the cost of collecting, organizing and analyzing that information, or the capital costs of agency automation. The 1990 Census will cost $2.5 billion. Closer to home, the New York State Government now invests a billion dollars a year in information technology and services.

The information society is upon us. It requires the delegates to the 1990 Governor's Conference to redefine the notion of "library" in light of the knowledge explosion and the revolution in information technology.

---

*Penicillin, beta blockers and antihistamines did not push aspirin alongside leeches in the cabinet of medical curiosities.*

---

Let me first try to dispel the naive and dangerous belief that computers, television, fibre optic, satellite transmission and a dozen other assorted marvels of the semiconductor age will reduce either books or libraries to the status of museum artifacts. In the immortal words of Eliza Doolittle, "Not bloody likely"!

Technological revolutions just don't work that way!

The proof is all around us. The computer no more replaces the book than the Concorde replaces the Boeing 727 or the family automobile. Penicillin, beta blockers and antihistamines did not push aspirin alongside leeches in the cabinet of medical curiosities. Electronic technology simply creates an infinitely richer, more diverse information environment. It provides us with a sometimes bewildering array of choices about how we create, store, organize and distribute messages. These wonderfully powerful new tools vastly extend our power and reach and enable us to choose the suitable medium for the message we wish to create, communicate, read, see or hear.

The most significant phenomenon facing delegates to the 1990 New York Governor's Conference is not the revolution in information technology, which will simply continue at its own pace oblivious to resolutions Conference delegates may adopt. It is the dramatic transition, in less than a century and a half, from an era of scarce information to one of overwhelming abundance of data.

The distinctions among "data," "information" and "knowledge" are, I think, quite significant here. We are at serious risk of becoming a data-rich but information-poor society. We inhabit the world of T.S. Eliot's denizens of "The Rock" who wonder plaintively:

"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

"Where is the knowledge we have lost in information"?

And, we might add, "where is the information that lies submerged in a bottomless sea of data"?

In a futures study commissioned by the Information Industry Association, Clement Bezold and Robert Olson put the challenge squarely:

> The key issue facing our society is the creativity and social problem solving, but the average person knows little about them.[1]

How could it be otherwise, the authors observe, when "ten million adults today lack the information skills of a competent fourth grade student?"[2]

The critical questions before you at the Governor's Conference, in my opinion, are:

1 Who will benefit from the new information technology and who will be left behind?

2 What is the responsibility of local, state and Federal governments to narrow the gap between the "information haves" and the "information have nots"?

3 How can libraries help achieve information equity and information justice for all?

How shall we think about the social role of New York libraries in the decade ahead? The information revolution demands that we redefine in a very fundamental way not merely the mission of the library or the range of services it provides, but the very notion of a library itself. We must redefine *The Idea of a Library*.

The era of the library as "noble edifice" is at an end. Arthur D. Little Inc., one of the nation's most prestigious management consulting firms, asserts:

> Between now and the year 2000, the idea of a library as defined by *location* or *place* will continue to give way at an accelerating pace to the idea of a library...as *access networks*.[3]

It is no longer useful to think about the library simply as a place where books are kept, or even as an organized collection of objects in which data, information, knowledge and, occasionally, wisdom are stored in a variety of multimedia formats. All of these things are still true, but they are not what is most important about libraries. I propose the following as a working definition of "a library" for the delegates to the 1990 Governor's Conference.

> A library provides continuing, effective and useful access to information stored in all forms and formats and in a variety of locations.

Think of a library as an "information bank." The choice of a bank as the analogy is not accidental. What is important about the notion of a bank is not that it is a large stone building with pillars

*"Every living thing is changed, owing to the advent of cable."*

Drawing by Ed Fisher; ©1989 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

in front and employees who work in cages. What is important is that the bank provides access to money. Indeed, for many people under 30, a bank is a sidewalk automatic teller machine (ATM).

The banking analogy may also be helpful in understanding why we have over 7,000 libraries — public, elementary and secondary school, college and university, hospital, prison, corporate and institutional — in New York State alone. Do we really need all those libraries? If we have a public library with a children's room, why do we need an elementary school library? One might as readily ask, "if we have a commercial bank in town, why do we need a savings bank, a savings and loan, and a credit union?" The answer to both questions is the same. Because they perform essential but different functions that complement one another. And because the world is complex economically and as an information environment.

*Think of a library as an "information bank."*

Public, school, special and university libraries may, from time to time, serve some of the same clientele, because people of all ages and all social classes today have an insatiable appetite for information. Like money, information now has to be available at different times and places, through multiple points of access. That is why banks, which have become highly competitive and, as a consequence, very customer-oriented, invest so heavily in ATMs. And that is why, in the current information-based society, we must invest much more heavily in expanding and strengthening the state and national information infrastructure.

It is not in the national interest to permit the erosion of our information base. Our State or our nation cannot afford a two-tier society, where only a handful of the wealthy and the well-educated people are able to enjoy the benefits of information abundance, while citizens of more modest means are deprived of access to the information they need to realize their potential as workers, as informed participants in the democratic process and as inheritors of the intellectual and cultural legacy of nine thousand years of civilization. Above all, we cannot tolerate the continuation of a permanent underclass of information illiterates whose potential contribution to society will forever remain unrealized.

In the words of Theodore Rozak:

> In the libraries of the nation, we have an existing network spread across the society, stationed in every neighborhood and in the charge of experience people who have always honored a strong ethic of public service. If the equipment for computerized reference facilities were concentrated in local libraries, or better still for reasons of economy, if every local library were linked to a generously funded regional reference center, this would be the fastest and cheapest way for the general public to gain open access to whatever benefits the Information Age may have to offer....Making the democratic most of the Information Age is a matter not only of technology, but also of the social organization of that technology.[4]

This is the challenge to the 1990 New York State Governor's Conference — to create a structure that assures every New Yorker of access to the vast knowledge resources that are now available. That is a formidable challenge. It is exceeded in magnitude only by the size of the opportunity to enhance the quality of life that modern information technology provides.

You have only to marshall the collective vision, courage and wisdom to reach out and seize that opportunity and to begin the process of translating it into a reality. Howard Bowen reminds us that "stating the ideals is, of course, not the same as achieving them, but it is a beginning."[5] I urge the delegates to the 1990 Governor's Conference to make just such a beginning.

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# LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR PRODUCTIVITY

*By Robert Kraushaar, Director, Bureau of Economic and Demographic Information, and Barbara Beverley, Senior Librarian, New York State Department of Economic Development, Albany, NY*

New York State, the world's ninth largest economy, is increasingly affected by international economic trends and competition. The economy has changed significantly in the last decade and will continue to change in the 1990s. Information and the quality of the workforce will have much to do with economic growth in the 1990s. This paper presents an overview of how and why the economies of New York and the nation are changing. It also shows why information is essential to a healthy economy and a productive workforce and how library services relate to the economic health of the State and nation.

## NEW YORK'S CHANGING ECONOMY

New York's economic performance during the second half of the 1980s was impressive. Recovering from the depths of a severe national recession in 1982-83, the State added over one million jobs to reach record-high employment levels. At the same time, in 1990 New York's economy significantly differs from that of 1980. Manufacturing, adversely impacted by such factors as foreign competition and new technological demands, declined in New York by close to 300,000 jobs. Businesses in the service/information sector, on the other hand, increased significantly, both in terms of absolute employment growth and overall percentage of New York's economy.

These structural economic changes are not unique to New York or even to the United States; every industrial country has seen its service/information sector greatly expand. Even the manufacturing sector is different from what it was in 1980. It is intensely competitive, initiating new concepts such as "flexible manufacturing" or "just-in-time production," and recognizes that enhancing employee motivation and productivity is a major key to success.

While the New York economy experienced tremendous growth in the 1980s, its future performance is far from assured. First, economic growth was uneven; some industries, especially manufacturing, and some communities, particularly those in the North County and Western New York, ended the decade in a poorer competitive position than they started. Second, the State's economy is in no way isolated from international economic trends and competition. Third, some industries that formed the backbone of that economic growth, such as financial services, have seen their growth slow or even decline in the past few years. And finally, New York's workforce is changing; its future composition and skill levels unclear.

**NEW YORK STATE'S RANKING AMONG COUNTRIES**
**GROSS NATION/STATE PRODUCT**

| Rank | Nation | (billions) |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | United States | $4,206.1 |
| 2 | USSR | 2,356.7 |
| 3 | Japan | 1,962.7 |
| 4 | West Germany | 897.5 |
| 5 | France* | 724.2 |
| 6 | Italy* | 600.0 |
| 7 | United Kingdom | 554.0 |
| 8 | California | 533.8 |
| 9 | NEW YORK STATE | 362.7 |
| 10 | Canada | 351.5 |

**Gross Domestic Product*

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis; The World Bank; CIA World Factbook

## WHY THE ECONOMY HAS CHANGED

In recent years, manufacturing in New York and the United States has been battered by a variety of forces. Increasing competition from overseas, for traditional U.S. export markets and for markets at home, slow productivity growth, new technological demands, environmental and other regulatory demands, and a lack of adequate training for workers and managers have all put pressure on manufacturing.

Slow growth in productivity was one key contributor to the nation's failure to "meet the test of international competition" in the last decade and a half. In the 1970s, the price position of U.S. goods in international markets deteriorated rapidly as a result of labor output declines, comparatively high inflation and interest rates. In the 1980s, price position problems resulted largely from the dramatic increase in the value of the dollar in the period 1979-85, which led to sharply rising costs of materials and prices in comparison to those abroad. The erosion in the quality of U.S. goods vis-a-vis products available from our competitors compounded the effect of the price disadvantage on competitiveness. This was only partially offset by slower growth in costs and prices between 1980 and 1988.

While the decline in the value of the dollar and other factors have now improved the competitive position of U.S. products in international markets, surveys of American companies suggest that many firms are not utilizing that advantage to penetrate and establish solid shares of world markets by opening or expanding factories.

## NEW POLICIES NEEDED

State and Federal policies for improving productivity require investment in human capital as well as in plants and equipment. Many experts suggest that targeting labor cost reduction as the sole route to productivity improvement is ill-founded.

As the world economy becomes more integrated, development of global marketing strategies becomes even more essential, not just to expand foreign sales, but also to protect domestic market share from increasingly sophisticated foreign competitors. Although recent trade figures have been somewhat encouraging, economists now realize that a lower dollar alone will not cure our trade deficit ills. We need aggressive export strategies to sustain levels of growth necessary to reduce the deficit and regain our strength in international markets.

The American economy historically derived its comparative advantage because of its capacity to develop and commercialize new technologies faster than its competitors. Today, this advantage has diminished because of the emergence of a global economy and the reduced time span required for change. Although the United States is still considered the leader in innovative technology, it has begun to lag behind other nations in the commercialization of new technologies. New York firms must be able to exploit technologies that lead to the development of new products and processes faster than their competitors at home and abroad. State assistance in the form of financial and technical assistance to research institutions as well as new and small businesses may enhance the process through better and more timely linkages between the innovation and commercialization of technology.

Finally, regions of the State must develop strategies to promote the products and services they produce most efficiently and for which the highest quality level can be attained.

## INFORMATION IS CRITICAL

As manufacturing decreased during the last 20 years, the services sector and its enormous need for information has become a critical source of economic strength for the State. Indeed, information is integrated into all aspects of work. Growth of knowledge-based products and industries reinforces tertiarisation and even blurs distinction between pure manufacturing and pure service activity, especially in such areas as the research, design and planning of new products,

### GROWTH OF THE SERVICE SECTORS

Given the growing importance of the service sectors, there are many observers today who argue that too little is being studied and analyzed in terms of the sector's impact on economic, employment, social and educational policies; moreover, that the institutional infrastructure in most member countries continues still to be a large extent to respond to an era that existed before the growth of the service sector took off. In this respect, new challenges are being posed for education, training and employment policies amplified by the rapid diffusion of new technologies throughout the economy. — Truett Airhart, "Improving Productivity," in *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science*, October 1980.

and the adaptation, customization and marketing of these new products.

New York's financial services, a long-term international leader, with its supporting business services, made a particularly significant contribution to New York's economic resurgence. New York State cannot take its future leadership in financial services for granted. New global and domestic forces, stemming from technological changes, the growing integration of the global economy and capital markets, deregulation and financial innovation are sweeping the nation and the world. Both domestic and international financial centers compete for jobs and economic activity provided by financial services. New York's location costs and advantages, the skills and availability of its workforce, the telecommunications infrastructure, regulatory framework and tax structure, all contribute to the rise or decline of its financial industry.

## BUILDING A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

New York State must build and maintain a competitive workforce as part of a set of related policies to increase productivity. Abundant natural resources, a growing population and labor force, and sheltered home and overseas markets dominated by U.S. suppliers, resulted in economic activity based on *quantity*, rather than *productivity* of inputs; and *volume*, rather than *quality* of outputs. In an international economy, the State will no longer be able to rely "on the assets of labor, capital, organization, and natural resources" that were appropriate for the decades from 1945 to the present.[1]

Managers should focus on quality production, more efficient and flexible plant design and process (such as just-in-time production), increasing the volume of goods produced for a given time period by identifying and eliminating bottlenecks, and improving labor performance by decentralizing authority and giving workers a greater stake in company decision making. Opportunities for worker ownership and participation — giving all employees a stake in the performance of the firm — can help increase employee motivation and productivity.

The State's competitive advantage depends on its ability to train and retrain its workforce to function efficiently. New work roles and tasks require workers to assume more responsibility and use more independent judgment and initiative. Skills needed in this environment include: problem recognition and definition; determining information needs; analytical skills; implementation skills; human relations skills; and, learning skills. These skills indicate that workers at all levels are information managers, not robots following precise instructions.

Recent studies of the skills required by employers show the extent of the gulf between education and the demands of the workplace. The New York State Department of Labor has estimated that 90 percent of all projected new jobs by the year 2000 will require at least a high school diploma, and 75 percent will require at least some college (compared to 42 percent now). In addition to basic skills, employers are also looking for learning and listening skills and such cognitive skills as problem solving and creative thinking. These skills should be taught early in the life of every student because they are the foundation for learning more advanced skills in later years. Without this foundation, much of later education deals with fundamentals instead of the acquisition of higher skills. Both public and private sectors have roles in training the workforce. Lifetime learning, based on a sound education in the State's schools and universities is fundamental to this capacity.

Problems of recruitment and achievement represent potential threats to the nation's and the State's competitive posture. As Carnevale stated, the result of these problems is a "human capital deficit among new and experienced workers that threatens the competitiveness of economic institutions and acts as a barrier to the individual opportunity of all Americans."[2] Both problems challenge us to forge new strategies for busi-

### THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

The nation faces a basic skills crisis and a general deterioration of academic performance. These issues are most often examined in the context of difficulties experienced by employers in recruitment and the "achievement gap" between U.S. and foreign students, particularly in the sciences and mathematics, but also in literacy and reasoning skills. — *International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Science Achievement in Seventeen Countries*. New York, Pergamon Press, 1988.

ness and labor as well as government in education the workforce of tomorrow.

In addition, quality and productivity require that we respond to the needs of a workforce whose composition has changed since World War II and continues to change. Some of these changes have placed the traditionally separate worlds of work and family in conflict. To ensure the smooth functioning of business and industry, economic development policies must address these new issues as well. New York State faces particular challenges in school and work-related failures of large numbers of low-income and minority youth who represent a critical component of the workforce of the future. As the size of their traditional source of new workers shrinks, employers will, in the words of Carnevale, "have to reach into the ranks of the less qualified to get their entry-level workforce." That means that an increasing number of entry-level workers will come from groups where historically human resource investments have been deficient.[3]

In response to these problems, the Board of Regents has focused on increasing high school completion rates and the Job Training Partnership Council (JTPC) has documented the need for a comprehensive strategy to assure the productivity of the State's youth.[4,5]

## HOW LIBRARIES MEET INFORMATION NEEDS

Superior technology vital to international competition depends on improved information technology and the wide dispersal of information. Rapid access to current and accurate information is essential if manufacturing firms are to exploit new technologies to improve competitiveness, if the service sector is to fill its great need for information and information services, and if employers and educators are to improve basic education and skills training to improve the productivity of the workforce.

Business and industry daily require vast amounts of information for research and development, competitive intelligence, market research, forecasting, improving customer services, training employees, understanding copyright, determining waste disposal alternatives and maintaining awareness of laws and regulations on a global, as well as national, state and local basis. Federal and state agencies are also large consumers of information to develop and support economic policies and programs.

Sources of information — directories, annual reports, newspapers and journals, research literature, databases, microforms, government publications — are growing at an enormous rate. The more information that becomes available, the less likely it is that users can easily obtain and keep at hand all of the information resources they need. Information overload is avoided or managed by systems of information science — organizing, indexing and abstracting. Computers help people deal with large amounts of information; users rely heavily on people trained and experienced in accessing information.

Libraries are cost-efficient procurers of information. They acquire information resources in all forms in anticipation of need, organize them, record them in catalogs of all kinds and connect various pieces of information through indexes, cross-references and other "finding tools." Users can request searches from hundreds of computerized databases in libraries.

It is often more difficult to locate information than to use it. As information specialists, librarians know how to find information when it is not readily available. They help people locate and use information. They teach users how to locate materials themselves and they suggest alternate sources and paths of research as well as give caveats on unreliable sources. Over the next few years when the voluminous information from the 1990 Census becomes available, libraries will satisfy millions of requests for the data.

Libraries have created and supported the development of networks and systems for sharing resources. For example, the Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC), was founded in 1967 by the Ohio College Association to share cataloging data among Ohio libraries. Several thousand libraries throughout the world now use OCLC for cataloging, acquisitions,

### PRODUCTIVITY AND INFORMATION

Information is now more than 50 percent of our Gross National Product, and managers are slowly recognizing that information is the key to managing other resources. Using information technology to improve the productivity of the knowledge worker could be an important part of the solution to productivity decline....The most significant productivity improvement will come from the use of the information...not from its creation. — Truett Airhart, "Improving Productivity," in *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science*, October 1980.

interlibrary loan, and reference. Other networks and consortia perform similar functions.

Computerized library catalogs make library collections more usable and more widely accessible. People use their personal computers and modems in their home or office to search these catalogs.

Both librarians and library users have been frustrated at being able to identify materials quickly but not being able to get them easily. Consequently, libraries developed delivery systems using mail, UPS, courier and facsimile to obtain materials quickly. The New York State Interlibrary Loan Network (NYSILL), operated by the New York State Library, allows libraries to transmit requests electronically to the State Library and other libraries statewide.

Through such organizations as the Special Libraries Association, the American Library Association, the American Association of Law Libraries, libraries and librarians develop hundreds of formal and informal networks by which they are able to obtain information and resources quickly and accurately.

All of these networks and library computer systems have one purpose: to get the right information to the right person at the right time. Whether those persons are students, workers learning more about their jobs, business people trying to get a handle on exporting, or youngsters learning how to do research, libraries are there for them. Due to their organized methods of identifying, locating and retrieving information, libraries save users millions of dollars each year in time not wasted attempting to recreate data already available, time saved in not duplicating work already done and time not wasted on erroneous work. The value of the time saved by users when they turn to libraries for their information needs generally goes unrecognized.

Small business, which accounts for 43 percent of the Gross National Product and over half of technological innovations, relies heavily on public and academic libraries to supply information. Two thirds of all new small business ventures fail, often for lack of the right information and the understanding of how to use that information. Small business people often hesitate to contact government agencies at first. They prefer to do background work in a library under nonthreatening, nonjudgmental conditions before going to regulatory or other governmental agencies.

Libraries contribute to the training and retraining of the workforce. Many illiterate people and immigrants learn to read English in public libraries that offer their facilities for the use of literacy programs. Often these learners find the informality and the nonthreatening atmosphere of the library preferable to a formal classroom. One public library arranged with a nearby university for a career counselor to come to the library three evenings a week to advise people looking for employment. Many public libraries have set up Job Information Centers to help people looking for employment. These centers have information on employment opportunities, salaries, job hunting, writing resumes and interviewing. Education Information Centers in public libraries help people learn about classes and other educational opportunities offered by schools, community colleges and others.

"Special" libraries, situated in corporations and government, have unique resources and services and provide information tailored to the particular needs of their customers. They serve decision makers in government and industry, researchers, product developers, market researchers and sales staff. Librarians in special libraries also compile, organize and repackage information to meet the needs of the customer. The customers' requirements may be for extensive, daily searches of electronic databases, clipping services, report writing, training, or instruction on database searching. These libraries often produce publications to inform employees of recent acquisitions, journal articles, services and events pertinent to corporate activities. Frequently they are the center of competitive intelligence activities and services as well as the central repository and/or source for distribution of internal documents and publications.

Other ways in which libraries contribute to the productivity of workers include:

## CORPORATE LIBRARIES AS INFORMATION CENTERS

Corporate libraries are becoming information systems...functioning as self-initiating disseminators of information sensitive to the needs of managers in every division of a company. This proactive role leads to the packaging and active distribution of information on public affairs, governmental policy, marketing trends and market conditions, as well as to a managerial role in the creation and design of the services that a corporation renders. Proactive services become essential to...meeting the needs of busy managers who need an intermediary between themselves and the glut of information.... — Eva M. Thury, "From Library to Information Center: Case Studies in the Evolution of Corporate Information Resources," in *Special Libraries*, Winter 1988.

- providing correct, accurate and current information about global, national, state and local business climates for companies and governments to make informed decisions;
- serving as major access points for government information, such as military specifications, census statistics, legislation and regulations;
- adding value to information by analyzing and packaging data to meet the specific needs of a company or user. Some libraries, for example, index local newspapers and journals as well as periodicals of specific government agencies to facilitate locating articles that would not otherwise be available;
- anticipating the needs of clients and obtaining required information before it is needed;
- providing materials for continuing education of employees, including materials for formal courses, self-study and on-the-job needs;
- providing writing assistance, editorial advice and instruction on citations, footnotes and bibliographies; and,
- providing general and specific materials to allow users to keep current in their fields and to keep abreast of pertinent activities in related areas.

Examples of the key role played by libraries abound. Georgia Institute of Technology estimates that its computerized information system saves faculty $1.2 million in time saved. Texas Instrument's library saves its researchers and scientists so much time that it estimates a 515 percent return on investment. A librarian performed a database search for $11, which saved a company 200 hours in lab work.[6] Such activities occur many times daily in any library.

One company felt so strongly about the need to have excellent access to information that it hired a librarian as vice president and director of research.[7] In another corporation, without a library, engineers express continuing frustration in not having easy access to current and complete standards. They waste much time trying to obtain standards, something a library easily could rectify. As Glenn Smith, Manager, Information and Computer Service, Amoco Corporation, states "whether you are considering a new area of research or a new business venture, having ready, accurate information can assure that you make the right choices and can help...avoid costly mistakes."[8]

## WHAT GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE DELEGATES SHOULD CONSIDER[9]

Access to complete, accurate and timely information is vital to improving competitiveness in today's international economy and improving the productivity of the workforce. Since a significant portion of the State's economy depends upon the health of small business, the Conference should consider how to deal with two disturbing trends that affect access to information:

- privatization of government information, which increases costs to users and creates a dichotomy between the haves and the have-nots in free access to information; and
- publishing data only in electronic format, which assists those with computer and telecommunications capacity but can diminish access to and use by the general public.

These trends and the information needs outlined above suggest that the Governor's Conference should also consider the following actions to ensure library and information services for productivity:

- Make the large quantity of research and report data stored in electronic format accessible throughout the State with the accompanying need to support continued research on high-speed, low-cost communications networks;
- Strengthen the New York State documents depository system, a New York State Library service that partially counteracts the trend to commercialization of government information;
- Further improve library networking to share resources and services and encourage corporate, government and other special libraries and information centers to participate in this networking;
- Support public/private partnerships as Federal funding for library-related initiatives declines;
- Recognize and encourage the role of librarians and information specialists in the globalization of information;
- Ensure open access to government information to guarantee a democratic and economically sound society;
- Study and support library participation in education and skills training.

Information fuels productivity and societal growth as we prepare to enter the 21st century. Libraries have a major role in providing the information vital to the productivity and economic growth of New York State and the nation.

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# LIBRARIES, LITERACY AND THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

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*Few remember that to learn to read and write is one of the great victories in life.* — Bryher[1]

Illiteracy is often at the root of unemployment, hunger, homelessness, sickness, teenage pregnancies, prison terms, loss of jobs, lack of promotion and a host of other social problems. Literacy contributes to the individual's ability to share in government and in the rewards of the economy. A gap between a literate, participatory population and a nonparticipatory, illiterate population weakens democracy.

Libraries are major resources in closing this gap between literacy and illiteracy. As sources of information and a vital part of education, libraries play a significant role in communication, learning and enjoyment. They are the information, intelligence, and cultural center of communities. They are essential to meeting the demands and tasks of daily life. They are a key to decision making and a path to understanding other cultures. School library media centers, public libraries, and community college libraries are well-established, stable agencies. In rural and urban and suburban communities, libraries are adult learning centers that supplement and support other adult education providers and work with children to promote literacy.

Ironically, illiteracy limits access to information and libraries, the very place where illiterate people can change their situation. Although access is often considered in terms of removing obstacles for physically handicapped individuals, illiteracy presents even greater obstacles. Barriers to reading, writing, and other problem-solving skills must be removed. The first step in this effort is to define the barriers and develop strategies to overcome them.

This paper discusses: (1) various ways to define literacy, (2) the role of libraries and information agencies in promoting and encouraging literacy; and (3) issues and problems requiring attention of the New York State and White House Conferences on Library and Information Services.

## LITERACY: A CONTINUUM OF DEFINITIONS*

Over the years various definitions and measurements of literacy have evolved. Based on the effects of literacy on the individual and society in different cultures and periods, these definitions generally fall into three categories:

1. *Conventional literacy*. One of the earliest definitions, conventional literacy refers to the ability to read, write and comprehend texts on familiar subjects and to understand whatever signs, labels, instruction and directions are required to function. This is sometimes defined as fifth or sixth grade schooling.

2. *Functional literacy*. This requires a combination of skills needed to communicate effectively. This includes numerical and verbal skills — written and oral. Following are three variations on the definition of functional literacy:

   (a) "Self determination." Hunter and Harman define literacy as "the possession of skills *perceived as necessary by particular persons and groups* to fulfill their own self-determined objectives as family and community members, citizens, consumers, job-holders and members of social, religious and other associations of their choosing."[3] Similarly, the terms coping, survival, performance skills identify such personal needs as earning a living, caring for children, reading forms, getting a driver's license, understanding a prescription label.

   (b) Requirements for economic success. In 1975, the study at the University of Texas, Adult Performances Level (APL) focused on functional skills and content areas necessary for minimal levels of education and economic success in the United States. These included: the skills of reading, writing, computation, problem solving and identifying facts and terms in relation to content areas: community resources, occupational knowledge, consumer economics, health and government and law. According to APL, one in five Americans were illiterate. The skills and content areas have been used as guides by librarians and publishers.

   (c) Grade level or completion of high school. Literacy in terms of a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED). At this grade

*The author is indebted to Jack A. Brizius and Susan E. Foster for the concept of a "continuum of definitions."

level adults are considered capable of functioning efficiently in today's society. Many literacy specialists consider grade levels misleading and meaningless. After looking at various measures of literacy, Brizius and Foster find school completion may not reflect true literacy, but does have a strong correlation between years of school completed and other measures — school grading "may not be far off."[4]

3. *Levels of literacy*. In addition to defining literacy, some studies mark off levels of literacy. The concept of literacy has expanded beyond the definitions of conventional and functional literacy, to specific areas: aliteracy, workplace literacy, mathematical literacy, family literacy, biliteracy, computer literacy, scientific literacy, graphic literacy, civic literacy, English as a second language, women and literacy, Right to Read programs and cultural literacy. In each, the skill and art of reading becomes a major component.

Aliteracy describes people who can read but do not wish to or will not.[4] This attitude produces a semi-literacy and regression of skills. For this large group of adults and youth, libraries can assume a strong role in stimulating interest and use of the information resources.

Workplace literacy has been defined as a set of skills necessary to perform a specific job or type of job. Workers need the ability to read competently the required work-related materials. It emphasizes situation-specific, job-specific analysis and, increasingly, focuses on "how-to-learn" skills because jobs are changing so rapidly.

Required competencies vary from occupation to occupation and from job to job within occupations. As jobs change and require more specialized and higher problem-solving skills, people need higher levels of literacy, as suggested by such terms as "mathematical literacy," "civic literacy," etc.

In addition to defining literacy, the Appalachian Adult Education Center (AAEC), Morehead State University (Kentucky), divides disadvantaged adults into four major groups.[5]

Adults in Group I are educationally disadvantaged but economically and personally secure. They are employed. They have high expectations. They desire completion of high school and advanced education. They seek credentials. Frequently they are library users. They are easier to recruit to adult education, are willing to adapt to rigid time schedules, they can be reached through the media. They are close to mastery.

Adults in Group II are underemployed and undereducated. They see illiteracy as a stigma. Many are somewhat literate. They show swift and dramatic change in academic skills and employment status through educational intervention. Busy people with little time, they need flexible programs adjusted to their time. They are apt to have large families, work on shifts and do primarily seasonal work.

Adults in Group III are extremely deprived. They have little employment in low-paying, short-term, dead-end jobs. They have limited literacy skills and see it as of little value. They have repetition of unsuccess and include dropouts, pushouts and persons with language differences. They can be reached only through direct and personal recruitment methods. They need outreach services, transportation, child care and health care. They require carefully structured formal programs and professionals and paraprofessionals trained in the instruction of adult learners. They need door-to-door recruitment. They respond to individualized support and articulated subgoals toward which they can work.

Adults in Group IV are caught in poverty and perpetuate the poverty cycle. They are unemployed and unemployable. They are fatalistic, with little hope or chance for change. They are "invisible." They need services taken to their homes and need help in solving human personal problems. Although they are the hardest to reach, they are the smallest group. They seldom see their problems as information needs. They strive only to survive. Yet AAEC studies show that they can go from nonreaders through high school completion when approached through the delivery system-home instruction. They have high information needs. They require, as does Group III, more financial aid than Groups I and II.

Because of a changing economy and human problems, men and women are not fixed in these groups. Where plants close and workers are laid off, adults in Group I or II may move to Group III. In some instances, only one member of a family may be in need of literacy education. Factors that prevent students from succeeding or being able to continue in library literacy programs prove to be problems related to jobs, health and family.[6]

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*Ironically, illiteracy limits access to information and libraries, the very place where illiterate people can change their situation.*

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Changing job shifts make it difficult to meet on a regular learning schedule. Construction workers

required to work overtime, where there is no telephone, cannot keep tutoring schedules. Accidents and health problems, either physical or emotional, interfere with study. Unstable family relationships, derision and sabotage by family members cause difficulties. Children are ill. Workforce and family literacy programs need to take into account such factors. Unless learners lives are given attention and care, adults in Groups III and IV have no margin of resources in health, time, or work to use for learning.

## FIGHTING ILLITERACY THROUGH LIBRARIES

The New York State Education Department estimates that as many as 4 million New Yorkers are in need of literacy assistance. The Department also points out that the flow of refugees and immigrants to the United States increases the number of people needing assistance with literacy or English language skills.

In New York State, literacy is advanced through a network of library systems of varying sizes and services for literacy: 23 public library systems, 46 school library systems, 77 Job Information Centers, 9 reference and research library resources systems, 30 community college libraries, libraries in the State University of New York and State Education Department programs. The wider network includes 240 classroom programs in schools and other formal educational settings.

In addition, New York State has some unique literacy resources. The two largest volunteer organizations, Laubach Literacy Action (LLA) and Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) have national headquarters in Syracuse. New Readers Press, a publishing division of Laubach Literacy International, is a major source for literacy materials at basic and functional literacy levels. The E.S. Bird Library at Syracuse University maintains a collection of materials of particular interest to those studying illiteracy, literacy and the adult learner. Literacy Volunteers of New York State (LVA-NYS) brings leadership and a wide range of activities and services to adult new readers. A strong Adult Basic Education Program reaches out to help adults attain credentials.

The Division of Library Development provides leadership, technical assistance and funds to public library systems across the State. The Division has used Federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title I money as a consistent source of Federal funds for library literacy projects. State funds proposed for 1990-91 would ensure continuing and improving literacy projects and help in developing services to families and correctional institutes. In Washington, the passage of landmark adult literacy legislation should have significant impact on libraries.

The accelerated literacy programs in New York City testify to the value of realistic local financial support. Brooklyn, New York and Queens Borough public libraries have received extra funding as a result of the

### WHY LIBRARY INVOLVEMENT IN LITERACY EDUCATION?

Because the Library:

- is there — it is a stable government-designated information agency, an educational agency. Information is library business.
- offers learners alternative choices in location and time.
- is nonthreatening, unconnected to past school failure.
- is the logical resource for reading and learning materials.
- selects from the entire range of literacy activities, making each program unique depending on the community and institutional characteristics.*
- supplies within and outside the library media resources: at adult basic and functional literacy levels, aids and tests for high school diplomas and GED programs and academic degrees.
- has a proven record of significant cooperation with literacy volunteer agencies.
- develops training programs, training kits, newsletters, software, annotated bibliographies.
- offers alternative and enhancing library activities and programs — book talking, book discussion groups, storytelling, reading aloud and advisory and brokerage services.
- participates in research, evaluation and staff development programs.

*Zweizig, Douglas L., Robbins, Jane, and Johnson, Debra Wilcox; *Libraries and Literacy Education: Comprehensive Survey Report*, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Library Programs, May 1988. p. 10.

commitment the City of New York made to funding literacy programs in 1988, after four years of special assistance from the City's Municipal Corporation (MAC).

In 1990, 10 libraries and library systems in New York State library gained financial support from LSCA Title VI: Buffalo and Erie County, Clinton-Essex-Franklin, Mid-York, Nassau, New York, Nioga, Queens Borough, Rochester, Schenectady and Westchester. The LSCA Title VI program is administered directly by the U.S. Department of Education.

## PRIORITIES FOR WORKPLACE AND FAMILY LITERACY

As the goals of productivity and literacy merge, workplace literacy and family literacy, will become priorities in the 1990s.

Retraining workers and securing well-prepared, entry-level employees is a major challenge for New York employers. Employers need high school graduates with basic skills in reading, mathematics and verbal and written communication. Increasingly, they need people with higher levels of these skills and with technical skills. Employers are concerned with specific tasks and instruction in skills that bring about the best possible performance. As demographic patterns change, they look to more minorities and women in the workforce. The Governor and the Legislature have expanded the State's financial commitment to Employment Preparation Education (EPE) and workplace literacy aid ($4 million was available to the Education Department in 1984; $44 million is available in 1990). EPE funds are allocated on a student contact-hour basis to public schools and BOCES. In 1988-89, the Legislature appropriated $3.5 million for support of literacy provider agencies ineligible to receive EPE school aid, much of which supports literacy-based volunteer tutoring programs. Libraries have a long tradition of library service to labor. The New York Public Library and the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, for instance, pioneered what is now called "workplace literacy" services in their work with unions in the 1930s and 1940s, as part of their readers advisory services. Today, some of the same services are carried on in education or job information centers and workplace programs across the nation.

The problem of low literacy levels among children and youth poses new challenges. Low literacy tends to be passed on from generation to generation. Prevention is a priority. Librarians in public libraries and school media centers have a long and distinguished record in serving families. They help parents learn to read, to read to their children and tell stories. New York State became a leader in family literacy programs in 1988 when it used $703,000 of LSCA funds to support 17 family reading projects in public library systems. These projects served people in 52 counties: More than 220,000 adults and children in 107 communities became involved in literacy and preliteracy activities at their local public library and library system.[7] Youth services specialists and other librarians are continuing many of the activities begun in family reading project through State, local and private monies.

Today, libraries and businesses develop family literacy programs together. For example, Bell Atlantic and the American Library Association have formed "a partnership to encourage libraries to develop or enhance library-based family literacy programs."[8] Business and community organizations join libraries in promoting September as "library card sign-up month" and distributing the Bill Cosby "Learning Begins at Home" and "Get a Head Start at the Library" folders published by the American Library Association.

Libraries in New York State have established innovative centers that bring together literacy specialists, teachers, volunteer tutors, coordinators and librarians. Six Literacy Centers were established at Queens Borough Public Library and a Lifelong Learning and Job Information Center at Buffalo and Erie County Public Library. Computerized assisted instruction is emphasized at Onondaga County Public Library. Since 1970 Brooklyn Public Library has been involved in literacy education and conducts an expanded exemplary program with a strong student support system.[9]

The New York Public Library has established centers dedicated to the learning of both reading and writing. The centers publish small volumes of student writing each year. Nassau Library System's Education Information Centers (EIC) is one of six library-based projects which link community and workforce. The Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System in Plattsburgh provides computer-assisted instruction for homebound and institutionalized literacy students. The Onondaga County Public Library, headquartered in Syracuse, has for years worked closely with both of the national volunteer literacy programs to provide literacy information and referral. Several public library systems, including Chautauqua-Cattaraugus and Suffolk Cooperative, are the sponsors of local LVA affiliates. The Westchester Library System contracts with its local LVA affiliate to bring volunteer literacy services to public library settings.

## SERVICES CHECKLIST

Specific services provided by libraries in adult literacy centers and programs include:

- collection development
- public awareness

- coordination and management
- space for tutoring and training
- recruitment of learners and tutors
- testing and screening students
- English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes
- coalitions and alliances with other community providers
- liaison representatives to literacy councils
- preparation of materials for study
- writing and publishing for and by adult new readers
- workshops on storytelling, book talking
- reading lists and individual reading guides

## ISSUES

The complexity of social and economic needs and demands related to literacy alone "stretch the limits of service and test the adaptability of [library] organization." Multiple resources of personnel, monies and materials are necessary in order to meet the responsibilities and demands for successful, efficient, institutionalized library involvement in literacy education. Librarians need to understand human relations: adult and child development; adult learning; women's learning; and program planning processes. They need to understand the special problems that Hispanic, African-American and Asian people face in today's troubled American society. They also need training in languages and in the cultural background and lifestyles of New York State's diverse population.

Is library involvement in literacy education peripheral or integral to library policy, objectives and services? Must literacy education become an integral part of the permanent program of a library system in order to make a real difference in influencing the literacy levels of locality, state, or region?

How is the library's role in literacy education viewed? What is the role of librarians and library trustees in the literacy movement? Is it misunderstood, rejected, ignored, or invisible either within the profession or among other educators, business managers, social workers? Do libraries need to be more assertive and less reactive? What are librarians' attitudes and beliefs concerning their role?

What is the place of libraries in the literacy education activities in school, communities, and colleges? How may barriers to participation in shared community activities be removed? Can problems of power ownership and assessment of blame for the literacy gap be eliminated?

What is an equitable balance between funding from the government and from the private sector? The increasing demands on charitable organizations raise questions. Do library literacy programs need reliable support for longer periods of time? Does workplace literacy stress profits or education? What balance is possible?

Other questions arise. How can literacy policy be coordinated at various governmental levels and among associations for library professionals? How may agreements with other literacy providers be made to ensure stability and flexibility in service?

What opportunities for staff development and education may be provided by the State Education Department, university departments of information and library studies and by library systems in recruiting and training staff or potential staff in order to achieve expanded literacy involvement?

Social, economic, occupational, educational problems as well as cultural and political problems have a literacy component. A library that becomes a part of the life of adult men and women can bring to them learning opportunities, information on issues and events, on resources within the community, a wealth of knowledge and cultures. In the information/learning society that overwhelms with facts, issues and problems, the library provides a place for organized, retrievable, up-to-date information and knowledge as well as pleasure and enjoyment.

The changing roles of libraries interlock with a changing economy, changing educational needs and interests and transform a vision into reality. The 1990s, the entrance to the 21st century, becomes a time of promise and achievement.

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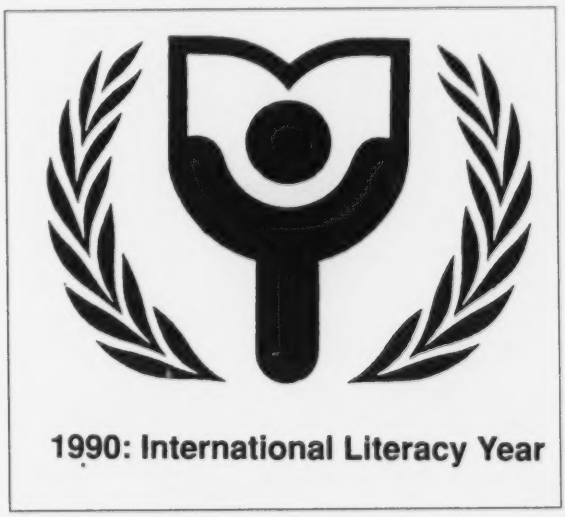


# THE LIBRARY AS A SOURCE OF CIVIC LITERACY

*By Stephen L. Schechter, Professor, Russell Sage College, Troy, NY, and Executive Director, New York State Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, 1986-90*

*Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own governours, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.* — James Madison, inscription at the Main Entrance of the Library of Congress

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the library has developed as an essential institution of American democracy. As early as 1815, Jesse Torrey spoke of the "universal dissemination of knowledge and virtue by means of free public libraries" as a "cause consecrated by religion and enjoined by patriotism."[1] During the first half of the 19th century, the public library joined the public school as democratizing institutions intended to kindle a love of liberty and knowledge in the common man. During the second half of the 19th century, the library became an instrument of acculturation for thousands of immigrants and for freed blacks who hungered for citizenship.

In the 20th century, the library became the "arsenal of democracy," gathering together and protecting the written heritage of democracy and providing a gateway to its ideals. Writing at the onset of World War II, at a time "in which the burning of the books is a present fact abroad and a present possibility at home," Archibald MacLeish, then Librarian of Congress, spoke of the book as "a construction of the spirit" and librarians not only as "keepers of the word" but also as its partisans and advocates.[2] Franklin D. Roosevelt put it succinctly, when he observed:

> Libraries are directly and immediately involved in the conflict which divides our world, and for two reasons; first, because they are essential to the functioning of a democratic society; second, because the contemporary conflict touches the integrity of scholarship, the freedom of the mind, and even the survival of culture, and libraries are the great tools of scholarship, the great repositories of culture, and the great symbols of the freedom of the mind.[3]

Today, libraries continue to function as "meccas of self-help," observed Daniel J. Boorstin, Librarian of Congress, "the most open of open universities...where there are no entrance examinations and no diplomas, and where one can enter at any age." For Boorstin, libraries are "full partners in a dynamic Learning Society."[4] Boorstin eloquently captured the present challenge when he observed:

> As citizens of the world's longest-lasting democracy, we *must* have easy access to libraries more than ever before. How well we govern, how intelligently we think through on difficult issue after another, how rationally we perform at center stage on the planet, will depend on our taking advantage of that resource.[5]

Speaking at the 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Services, New York State Senator Major Owens painted the current problem more starkly: "When the electorate is ignorant and citizenship illiterate, democracy will surely die....You have heard of basic literacy, functional literacy, and information literacy. Try now to go one step further and accept and understand the concept of citizenship literacy. I define citizenship literacy as the ability to use history, current theories, facts, and public pronouncements to guide individual decision-making on public issues, propositions, the election of public officials and other similar matters. Democracy is on trial because too large a percentage of our populous are citizenship illiterates."[6] Speaking in optimistic terms, Senator Owens believed:

> No problem or obstacle related to the development of adequate public knowledge and information systems is insurmountable. But to persevere and overcome, first we must believe, we must be convinced, that libraries are vital. We must feel in ourselves that the flow of information and knowledge to the public is a life and death matter.[7]

Most individuals would probably share Senator Owens' belief that public knowledge and information are essential to the future of democracy; that civic literacy is an essential prerequisite of freedom. Fewer individuals would share his conviction that libraries are vital to the development of adequate public knowledge and information systems in the battle against civic illiteracy. The democratic role of libraries — in building an informed citizenry — sounds good; but how important are libraries as a source of citizen education? When stacked against other priorities of community service and self-improvement, the realistic answer for most librarians and patrons would proba-

bly be "not very"; and for so many others who rarely if ever visit a library, the answer would undoubtedly be one of bewilderment.

I share Senator Owens' conviction in the promise of American democracy and the role of libraries in its future. However, I also believe that fulfilling this promise will require a positive and active commitment by libraries and the public information system of which they are a part. My remarks are directed toward this end.

## THE LIBRARY AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Less than a generation ago, libraries were regarded primarily as a source of books; today, libraries have become a source of information. As librarians know, this distinction is not as clear cut as it may seem. Libraries have always housed a variety of resources, and many of today's potential patrons are unaware of the library's wider role in society.

Nonetheless, the distinction is real enough: the library of today is a critical component of the American information system, and this is simply the only possible starting point for understanding the role of libraries in our democratic society. How has this expanded role developed? And what are its implications for effective citizenship?

First and foremost is the veritable explosion of information and information providers. What began as a home business for some is now big business for many, and the literature for citizenship is no exception. The growth of specialized publishing houses such as Congressional Quarterly, the staying power of single reference works such as *The Almanac of American Politics*, the contributions of bicentennial literature including *The Founder's Constitution* and *The Encyclopedia of the American Constitution*, and the explosion of popular "tell-all" books on American politics since Watergate, all have dramatically increased and enriched the print material in libraries for citizenship education.

A second major source of change has been the emergence of all governments as the major source of information on citizenship in the American system. Federal and state governments publish and disseminate a wide variety of material as part of their mandate to keep the public informed of public problems, social statistics and government operations. Both governments have also funded major studies and reports of value to individuals in their capacity as citizens. Major libraries in each congressional district may serve as depositories for this material, while smaller libraries have come to rely upon government and quasi-government publications for their reference shelves on the law, government and public affairs. Even local and county governments keep local libraries stocked with reference material and public announcements.

A third major feature of today's national information system and the library within it is the diversity of the media in which information is contained. While most of us share a love of good books, we must also recognize the increasing importance of the audio and visual presentation of information for the hearing and sight impaired, for the functionally illiterate, for teachers in need of audiovisual material and for the transmission of audiovisual programs and public events to all of us. Of increasing importance are computer-based media as finding aids not only to materials in one library but also to items within an entire interlibrary system and beyond through the medium of online computers.

A final change is the proliferation of information sources that lie beyond the effective reach of libraries. The classic example is word-of-mouth and its current manifestations are computer networking and newsletter publishing. In the area of citizenship, public policy and the law, the explosion of common and statutory law makes it virtually impossible for libraries outside of major law schools, universities, law firms and the news media to keep up with the specialization and proliferation of legal and policy information. At the same time, beneficial changes in technology now make it possible, at the very least, to develop the kind of interlibrary information systems that will allow patrons to access the holdings of various libraries from their home library's computer terminal.

The implication in all this has to do not simply with the proliferation of information but with its management. The library has become an important part of a national information system, and its role in our democratic society will depend on how well it manages its information-centered role. It is toward this management function that the next section of my remarks is directed.

## THE LIBRARY AS AN INFORMATION MANAGER

At the risk of seeming totally utilitarian, let me state that *effective* citizenship requires *usable* information. Simply put, the individual as citizen is a constituent part or a voting member of civil society. In the American system, all persons regardless of citizenship are entitled to the rights and protection of the United States Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. The only rights and responsibilities restricted to American citizenship are the rights to vote and to hold elective public office. In a nutshell, citizenship centers on political participation.

In the American system, there is no requirement or category of *active* citizenship. If citizens do not register, they are unable to vote; if they do not vote on a regular basis, they may have to re-register. But there is no penalty for the failure to participate.

In this, as in other matters, the twofold challenge is engagement and efficacy. First, individuals must be engaged in the process of participation by seeing clear reasons for getting involved. Second, engaged or interested citizens must have a feeling of effectiveness in the process or they will loose interest and drop out of it. Libraries may play a small role in the engagement process by turning individuals onto citizenship through a book read or a lecture attended. But in all likelihood, the role of the library in effective citizenship comes later in the process when the interested citizen needs *particular* information to participate effectively in the political process. There are several levels of such information:

1. At the narrowest level, the individual as voter may need information on particular candidates running for office.
2. At a slightly wider level, individuals may need information on particular issues — such as bond issues, constitutional amendment proposals, or referendum propositions — before the electorate.
3. Wider still is the information needed by individuals who are active or becoming active in a particular public policy issue or legal question, whether that be as a student, neighborhood resident, or an active citizen.
4. Also important are the informational needs of resident aliens who are preparing for citizenship and of young readers who may be preparing for effective citizenship.
5. Finally, there are members of the attentive public or active citizenry who have a sustained involvement in public affairs and a wide ranging interest in library holdings and services.

How should libraries plan to meet these citizenship needs? Should they do so specifically and actively? Suppose there is an environmental bond issue before the public that contains a provision that would allow increased funding for historical societies. Should libraries stock up on information regarding this particular bond issue? Suppose a particular community feels threatened by the possible siting of a nuclear power plant or a waste treatment plant. Is the public library obligated to obtain information regarding such issues and must the information be balanced?

Each library must decide for itself how much emphasis to place on citizenship education and how it will integrate citizenship education into its overall library plan. However, notwithstanding the diversity of libraries, I offer several basic recommendations to aid in this decision-making process.

First, citizenship education is not a new role that libraries are asked to assume in an age of limited funds and scarce resources. Rather, citizenship education can best be viewed as a cross-cutting responsibility toward civic literacy that can involve and enhance all library roles. We shall return to this point in the next section.

Second, the goal of citizenship education is not restricted to the *public* library. It is part and parcel of the ongoing mission of all libraries, including school, academic, special and government libraries. We shall return to this point as well in the next section.

Third, plans for meeting the goal of citizenship education must start with the assumption that each library is part of a larger regional, state and national information system. This system might include a rich diversity of libraries within one region that can share citizenship and public affairs information through various devices. However, as Senator Owens reminds us this system includes institutions other than libraries:

> It would be folly to argue that libraries alone stand at the brink preventing our democracy from plunging into chaos. Certainly they are not the only element needed, and, despite our strong emotional commitment, we should not blunder into an assertion that libraries are the most important component of an overall public knowledge and information system. We deem it sufficient to say that libraries are a vital part and, where appropriate library services are not included, no public is a complete and adequate structure.
>
> The key message of Plato's *Republic* is that justice exists when every element in society is accorded its proper place. Many interests contribute to the vital flow of knowledge and information. Appreciating and encouraging each unique role is of paramount importance for the preservation of a total, modern, free communications environment. Libraries should never attempt to do what the free press can do better. Public school systems, on the other hand, should not flee from their duty to develop programs that decrease the amount of basic and functional illiteracy in our society. Television commentators should not usurp the role of political organizations. Colleges and universities

should assume greater responsibility for the provision of education for citizenship literacy. Privately owned radio stations should not pretend to be as objective and disinterested as the variety of viewpoints found on the shelf of a public library.[8]

A fourth and related point is that the library must be prepared to play an active role in advancing the goal of citizenship education within the community. This can be accomplished by organizing or helping to organize a representative local citizenship-education coordinating committee in the community, county, or region.[9] The purpose of such a committee would be to identify community needs, assess community resources, develop strategies for resource sharing and implement those strategies as part of a citizenship-education network. It is toward these choices that the remainder of this paper is devoted.

## TOWARD CIVIC LITERACY 2001

According to a recent study published by the American Library Association, "Public library roles are profiles of library service emphases. Taken as a group, they provide a catalog of library service images. Each role is a shorthand way of describing a combination of factors important in planning: What the library is trying to do [,] Who the library is trying to serve [,] What resources the library needs to achieve these ends."[10] This study identified eight possible roles. (See Figure 1. Civic Lite acy Planning Matrix.)

Obviously, no single library can preform all of these roles with equal emphasis or success. However, within any given community or region, there is probably already in existence a system of libraries and information centers that does perform these roles, albeit in an uncoordinated fashion. Civic literacy is an information and service need that cuts across each of these roles.

Let us briefly considered how each of these roles can be applied to civic literacy without a significant investment beyond the commitment to identify needs, access existing resources, develop a strategy of shared resources and supplement individual library resources through such sharing arrangements.

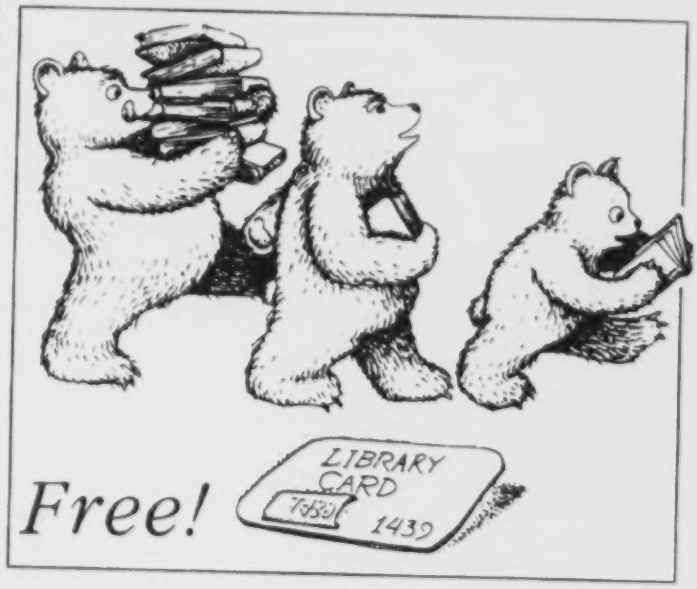
**Figure 1. Civic Literacy Planning Matrix**

| Roles / Public Libraries | Special Libraries and Information Centers | School Libraries and Media Programs | Academic and Research Libraries | Government Agency Libraries |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Community Activities Center | | | | |
| Community Information Center | | | | |
| Formal Education Support Center | | | | |
| Independent Learning Center | | | | |
| Popular Materials Center | | | | |
| Preschoolers' Door to Learning | | | | |
| Reference Library | | | | |
| Research Center | | | | |

Sources: Roles are taken from Charles R. McClure, et al., *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries: A Manual of Options and Procedures*, Chicago, American Library Association, 1987. p. 28. Libraries are adapted from National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, *Toward a National Program for Library and Information Services: Goals for Action*, Washington, DC, 1975.

1. *Community Activities Center.* As Charles McClure and his associates explain, this role envisions the library as "a central focus point of community activities, meetings, and services."[11] During the constitutional bicentennial, for example, libraries held public lectures, reading programs, exhibits and short courses on the American constitutional system. Libraries can also perform this role by convening and hosting meetings of an information coordinating committee along the lines discussed earlier. Libraries can also provide a neutral forum where candidates and/or issues advocates can present their views.

2. *Community Information Center.* In this category, "The library is a clearinghouse for current information and community organizations, issues, and services." Citizenship education is a major component of community services and information referral. Libraries of all kinds should be able, at a minimum, to direct inquiries regarding such citizenship information as: institutions of local, state and national governments; powers, programs and limits of those governments; elective offices and elected officials; voter information; status of pending legislation and public policies; background information on current public policy issues and on constitutional rights. This role is distinguished from the seventh "reference" function of the library by virtue of the fact that "community information" implies a more focused, applied and local level of information. However, it is quite possible that the search for community information on a particular public policy might lead to a wider search for additional material. In any case, this role is not limited to the public library. Both school and academic libraries should be servicing their users' needs in citizenship education, public policy research and voter information.




3. *Formal Education Support Center.* In carrying out this role, the library "assists students of all ages in meeting educational objectives established during their formal courses of study." In New York State, formal education in subjects related to citizenship education include: The Local Community in 4th grade, New York State and United States History in the 7th and 8th grades, American Government and Politics in the 11th grade and Participation in Government in the 12th grade. Basic holdings are quite possible in the areas of community, state and national history on the one hand and local, state and national politics and government on the other. Two publications of the New York State Department of State are often overlooked — the *New York State Constitution* and *Local Government Handbook*, which is an up-to-date textbook on local, county and state governments in New York State.

4. *Independent Learning Center.* In performing this role, the library "supports individuals of all ages pursuing a sustained program of learning independent of any educational provider." Here, of course, the library performs a direct service in supporting resident aliens who are preparing for citizenship. Other individualized yet sustained programs in the field of citizenship typically include state political history, constitutional law, current political events and selected public policy issues.

5. *Popular Materials Library.* The library performing this role "features current, high-demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages." At any given time, there are various best-selling books written by political observers on contemporary political scene. With a little ingenuity, librarians also can create a popular corner of civic, history and public policy materials that might include National Public Radio programs, popular "docudramas," recent state and local histories for the general reader, public policy literature on such issues as environmental protection and, of course, newspapers and current events magazines.

6. *Preschoolers' Door to Learning.* The library undertaking this role "encourages young children to develop an interest in reading and learning through services for children, and for parents and children together." Two publications by Arlene Gallagher provide useful information on children's literature

in the fields of law-related education and citizenship education, respectively. The first is *Living Together Under the Law* published by the Law, Youth and Citizenship (LYC) Program of the New York State Bar Association and the New York State Education Department and available from LYC, One Elk Street, Albany, N.Y. 12207. The other, coedited with this writer, is *Living Together Constitutionally*, a guide to the Pledge of Allegiance published by the New York State Bicentennial Commission and available from the Council for Citizenship Education, Russell Sage College, Troy, N.Y. 12180. Together, these publications will provide librarians and patrons alike with a wealth of information and insights into how to select and interpret children's literature from a citizenship education perspective. Selections are intended for elementary grade levels; however, many can be read to preschool children while others may direct the librarian to related preschool literature.

7. *Reference Library*. In performing this role, the library "actively provides timely, accurate, and useful information for community residents." As indicated earlier, this role is in many respects an extension of the second function of the library as a "community information center." With so many excellent finding aids and general reference works, many libraries can perform a considerable level of reference work in the areas of citizenship, current events, constitutional law, government and politics and public policy issues. In undertaking my own research, for example, I have often been able to go to a modest public or academic library on weekends and evenings in order to identify books and periodicals citations that can then be tracked down at libraries with more substantial holdings. The New York State Library also has a depository program that provides selected government documents to member libraries around the State. Libraries may also obtain the *Checklist** and other finding aids that reference New York State government documents.

8. *Research Center*. The library performing this role "assists scholars and researchers to conduct in-depth studies, investigate specific areas of knowledge, and create new knowledge." The major research centers in New York State are housed at large university libraries, major public libraries and the New York State Library and Archives. However, research centers can provide assistance to other libraries. For example, New York State Library publishes *Legislative Trends, Topics*, bibliographic references on public policy issues of relevance to the legislators and citizenry of New York State.

* *Checklist of Official Publications of the State of New York*, published monthly by the New York State Library, lists all New York State publications cataloged by the State Library.

## CONCLUSION

I have attempted to address the subject of the library and democracy at three levels. First, I have spoken to the promise of the library as a democratic institution, stressing its historic roles as a vehicle of democratization and acculturation, an arsenal of freedom, a mecca of self-help and citizenship education and a cornerstone of our public knowledge and information system. Second, I have outlined some of the developments that have occurred over the past generation, creating an age of information that has both complicated and facilitated the functioning of libraries today. Finally, I have explored some of the ways in which libraries of all kinds can more effectively direct some of their attention toward citizenship education without overburdening their existing staff and financial resources.

In five years, Americans will commemorate the happy coincidence of the 75th anniversary of women's suffrage and the 125th anniversary of black suffrage. It is my sincerest hope that New Yorkers will look upon this historic event in 1995 as an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to citizenship and the hard-won battles in which the ancestors of over 50 percent of our population have fought to secure the most fundamental right of citizenship — the right to vote. I urge libraries throughout the State to join with and, where necessary, bring together other educational organizations to begin now to explore ways in which their communities can take a major step by 1995 toward rebuilding an informed citizenry and responsible electorate.

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## PERRY ON HOW FUNDING AFFECTS ACCESS

All public services today are experiencing the pinch of economic constraints, and libraries are no exceptions. While falling revenues have lowered library appropriations, inflation and the fuel crisis have raised the costs of acquisitions, payroll and overhead. Consequently, library administrators have had to curtail hours, cut purchases of new print and nonprint resources and subscriptions to serials, and reduce reference, interlibrary loan and cataloging services. The combined effect of these cuts is for the user to slow down or even eliminate access by making it inconvenient, frustrating or impossible to locate material in a timely fashion. Even though we stand today at the threshold of both an information explosion and a technological revolution designed to make information instantly available, libraries today are insufficiently funded to exploit these exciting possibilities. It is no exaggeration to say that libraries will face continuing periods of crisis in the years to come as they try to reconcile their ambitions to serve the public with their dwindling resources. — *Access to the Past: The Librarian's Responsibility to the Future*, prepared by Elisabeth Israels Perry, Historian and Researcher (a position paper for the 1978 New York State Governor's Conference on Libraries, March 1978).

# ACCESS

*By Patricia Glass Schuman, President,*
*Neal-Schumann Publishers, New York, NY ©1990*

*Access to information and ideas is indispensable to the development of human potential, the advancement of civilization, and the continuance of enlightened self-government.* — Preamble to Public Law 100-382, August 8, 1988, authorizing the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services

The need to know is not new, but the amount of information needed in today's complex social and economic structures and the power of that information to determine who will succeed is unprecedented. It has become almost a cliché to say that informed citizenry is a public good — essential to a functioning democracy. But the questions of *who* should invest how much in *what* information, *when* and *for whom*, become critical in a society where information is a driving force.

While new electronic technologies are being developed for creating, processing and transferring information, the costs for new information services — as well as for books, magazines and other materials — is rising dramatically. Meanwhile, the past decade has been a time of steady decline in government support for libraries and education.

People's needs for access to information and ideas range from basic facts for survival to advanced forms of intellectual self-realization. Questions such as where to live, how to get a job, what to buy, where to travel, where to go to school, what to base an opinion on, whom to vote for, where to obtain health or legal information and how to cope with a crisis all require information for decision making. Variables like age, economic level, occupation, employment status, language, ethnic background, health, mobility, geography, intellectual ability and educational level are among the factors that affect individual access.

Theoretically, we are surrounded by an abundance of information resources. They include libraries, television, radio, newspapers, families, friends, publishers, government, database services, information brokers, social service agencies, etc. They often cross the lines between the public and private sectors. Conflicts arise between the philosophies of free access and free markets.

## PUBLIC GOOD OR ECONOMIC ASSET?

Books, newspapers and magazines are often treated as commodities; the principle of the public value of information has often brought the public interest into conflict with private interests. Public education competes with private; libraries compete with booksellers, etc. But never has the controversy been more apparent than in the current debate about privatization of information produced by the U.S. Government.

The debate centers on whether information should be treated as a public good available to all — or as an economic commodity to be bought and sold. The U.S. government is the largest publisher in the world. It provides a knowledge base, a research base, upon which both the public and private sectors depend. But public access to government information is diminishing rapidly.

Since 1982 one out of every four U.S. Government publications has been eliminated. Electronic databases developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Securities and Exchange Commission are now distributed only by private companies. Privatization has often more than doubled the cost to end users.

The problems of access are further compounded by the increasing ownership of the U.S. publishing and information industry by multinational conglomerates. Five commercial database vendors account for over 90 percent of the sales and uses of database services: Mead, DIALOG, STN, Maxwell and West. Once an industry made up of independent, family-run companies, trade book publishing is now dominated by a handful of corporations: Advance Publications, Hearst, MCA, the Pearson Group, Time-Warner, Bertlesemann and Paramount.

Many of the large information conglomerates cross national boundaries and owe no allegiance to any nation. For example, Maxwell Communications Corporation of London owns BRS, ORBIT, Infoline and, of course, MacMillan and other publishing companies. (BRS, incidentally, was originally funded by the National Library of Medicine.)

Ideally, new technology should make information distribution cheaper, quicker and more convenient. But with information in electronic formats, the taxi meter is always running. The cost accounting is easier. The profit potential is higher. Restrictions are simpler to impose. Public policy decisions about technological access are crucial because more and more public information is now only available in electronic formats —

and some of it only at high cost through commercial vendors.

Our information society raises constitutional, political, economic, educational, organizational and technical questions. Is access to information a right of every individual? If so, who will make sure that right is upheld? What will be the mechanisms for ensuring equal access to information? When does privacy, confidentiality or ownership take precedence over access? Equitable answers to these questions are essential. Some segments of our population are already receiving more benefit from new technologies and information services because they have the sophistication to use them, the money to pay for them and an awareness of the value of information.

Access to information is a public good that must be guaranteed — not only in principle, but in fact. An informed individual contributes to the benefit of society as a whole. Those with the competitive edge in life are those who are best informed.

The question is not so much whether information is "free." There is always cost. The basic question is who will pay? How will social goals be balanced with private interests?

*Electronic databases developed by the USDA and the SEC are now distributed only by private companies.*

Historically, that balance has been achieved by practices ranging from taxes that support libraries, to the Depository Library Program, to grants for research, to postal subsidies for books and Federal funding for education, to direct fees for services. Each of these practices has its own particular economic, social, legal and political ramifications.

Libraries traditionally have been viewed as the gatekeepers of information and ideas. In reality, publishers are the gatekeepers. They decide what to publish, when and for whom. Libraries and librarians are the gateways. They organize, preserve and make materials available. The gateway function is becoming increasingly crucial: over one million books are published annually; the average trade book remains in print for less than 12 months.

Libraries are the only societal institutions whose main ethical underpinning is the collection, preservation and dissemination of all types of information and ideas. While this goal is rarely a reality, traditionally librarians have been in the forefront of support for the First Amendment. Basic to most public, school and academic library collection development policies is an anti-censorship stance and the principle of providing free access to information on all sides of the issues. But libraries often play a somewhat passive role with respect to this concept. They tend to build generalized collections and offer generic services to an undifferentiated users. An information-demanding society requires a much more active stance.

## INFORMATION POVERTY

We may live in an information society, but the numbers of "information-poor" are increasing. Print illiteracy is almost a national disease. Some 700,000 functionally illiterate students graduate from U.S. high schools each year; 23 million Americans read below the fifth grade level — 35 million below the ninth grade level. And individuals must not only be print literate. They must be culturally literate, visually literate and computer literate. With all these skills, the individual might then have a chance at being "information literate."

Twenty-five million people live in homes where a language *other* than English is spoken. Minorities will constitute at least one third of the American work force by the year 2005. A disproportionately large segment of the poor are aged, black, Spanish-speaking or members of other minority groups. A majority of families living in poverty are headed by women. One out of every five children lives in poverty.

While all individuals need information in its most useable form, information access through libraries is needed even more by the educationally and economically deprived. The poor often have limited energy and resources to spend on information because of the demands of the daily struggle to survive. Many people do not believe that any formal systems, including libraries, can work for them. Others are inhibited by architectural barriers, geographic remoteness, language, attitudes and library requirements.

Services to all sectors of the information poor have often been sporadic and/or haphazard. With the exception of experimental programs — usually supported through Federal funds and special grants — they are not well served by libraries. Too often, just when special constituencies have begun to realize that libraries can help them, programs and services are discontinued for lack of funding.

Despite the success of some library literacy programs, community information and referral services and job and education information centers, some argue that libraries must continue to serve those who use them most. To develop new kinds of access is too costly and best left to other agencies. Yet, libraries are the only mechanism that American society has developed

to offer universality of access to ideas in all formats. Turning this goal into an operational reality is essential to a viable, democratic information society. Equality of access means creative outreach and meaningful service to all populations.

## EDUCATION AND MEDIATION

Using a library requires considerable determination and sophistication on the part of the user. If access to information is considered an inalienable right, then education about the nature of information and its applications is essential. People need to understand the mechanisms for accessing information, how to pose their questions, what to expect from the answers they receive and how to use the answers.

Too often individuals must fit into a rigid institutional mold to access information and ideas in libraries. Complicated arrangements, intimidating procedures, age and grade rules, closed shelves and other qualifications are also impediments to access. Some critics charge that libraries are organized for the convenience of the librarian and not for the convenience of the client.

People generally use library services when they have a perceived need - one that motivates them to seek a specific item. The librarian as a professional who diagnoses information needs by helping the user define the information problem — and then prescribing solutions — raises a new dimension of library services and access. This role requires an increased level of concern for the individual's conceptual framework and a better understanding of how people use information. It also means follow-up and feedback to ensure that the user's problem has been solved.

## COOPERATION

No library, no matter how large, can by itself provide access. The past decade has been a time of growth for library systems, networks, consortia and other cooperative projects. Some of these take advantage of new technological applications. But the lack of funding and uniform standards, cost accounting policies and procedures and jurisdictional responsibilities has sometimes locked resources into inaccessible and cumbersome bureaucracy.

The goal of universal access can only be accomplished through cost-effective and equitable resource sharing, the sensitive application of new technologies and the development of flexible service and delivery systems to provide effective information services. Meaningful access requires cooperation among all types of libraries.

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

Libraries are not viewed as dynamic and accessible information agencies in our society. Libraries are not considered strategic access points for information and ideas. This attitude is recurrent and circular. People are often reluctant to invest time and money to search for information in libraries because they anticipate that they will not find it. Library resources are often limited because of inadequate funding; they are often inconvenient and difficult to use. People hesitate to support libraries because they are not viewed as places that satisfy their basic needs.

The impact of libraries and librarians in a society powered by information could be massive. But the importance of libraries is not self-evident. Even if library services are expanded, redesigned or reordered, the issue of access will still exist unless we tell the full library story. We must convince leaders in government, education, business and the community that the demographic, social, economic and cultural realities of the late 20th century require effective library services, easily available to all individuals where they live, study and work.

Our challenge is to mobilize the public at large — and policy-makers — to fully support access; to show exactly how librarians and libraries help — and how the lack of either can hurt. Both the Governor's Conference and the national White House Conference offer us unparalleled opportunities to express our concerns, those of library users and — even more importantly — of those who do not use libraries but need library services.

# SAVING OUR VANISHING PAST

*By Carole F. Huxley, Deputy Commissioner*
*for Cultural Education, New York State Education Department*

Almost 80 years ago, twin tragedies struck New York. In one night's dreadful fire in the State Capitol building, the treasures of one of this country's five most important research libraries and the historical record of one of the most influential of the 13 original American colonies were largely destroyed. Today, in the conservation laboratory of the New York State Library and the New York State Archives, staff are reminded daily of the loss as conservators try to stabilize singed and crumbled pages and documents.

That same laboratory and the microfilming center nearby are simultaneously dealing with the effects of a silent and slow conflagration that continues to destroy our past and our research base as inexorably as visible flames. Acidic paper, produced from wood pulp in a process developed a little over 150 years ago, burns itself up within 50 to 100 years and leaves behind brittle paper crumbs. Sweep the floor of a major research library, and these crumbs will make a dismal pile before the broom. The fire can be fanned by poor environmental conditions and poor handling practices, but, even with stable conditions, the material is disintegrating.

A national effort has begun to save the information from these books and records and to establish permanent alkaline paper as the choice for publications and documents of the future. The National Endowment for the Humanities has established a preservation grant program of over $12 million per year to preserve the most important research collections, largely through microfilming, and to stimulate cooperative strategies to make preserved materials as fully accessible as possible. A resolution that has already passed the Senate and is now before the House of Representatives would establish a national policy on alkaline paper for government documents. And in 1990, the Federal Library Services and Construction Act provisions will, for the first time, support State preservation efforts with modest funding.

Even in advance of the Federal support, a number of state governments have begun preservation programs to save materials of particular importance to the research base of their regions. New York, with a $2 million annual program, was the first state to support such efforts and has committed the largest annual appropriation, by far, to this work. Connecticut has led the way in legislation encouraging the use of alkaline paper for state government publications, a model New York should quickly emulate.

Librarians and archivists are now quite well informed on the problem of brittle paper; and even the public has become aware of the need to preserve our research resources. Solutions, both interim and long term, have been identified and are either being applied or being tested. But many questions and many complications are yet to be addressed.

All of these activities would suggest that what is needed now is simply to do the work: to microfilm all of the material until another better preservation medium is developed and to begin using alkaline paper for all books and archival material. The problem is that, at the average microfilming cost of $40 per book, all of the books cannot be preserved. And at that price, one library does not want to waste its $40 on a book another library has preserved since it can purchase a microfilm copy for a fraction of the cost.

What should be saved, and what should be left to disintegrate? Who should decide that, and on what basis? How can a library know, without spending $40 worth of searching time, whether a brittle book has been microfilmed elsewhere? How can it easily order a copy, and how can the major provider libraries handle fulfillment? What about the great collections in other parts of the world and the problems both of preservation and of access?

Thirty-five academic institutions and major research libraries, including the New York State Library, are cooperating in support of the Commission on Preservation and Access whose mission is to stimulate the development and coordination of a national strategy and even an international effort to answer these and other difficult questions. The Commission's activities have ranged from advocacy for the now-established NEH preservation funds to research into the feasibility of a national collection of microfilm archival and copy masters. The Commission has produced a major documentary for public television, "Slow Fires," to raise public awareness of the crisis of crumbling research materials and has cosponsored — with NEH, the Library of Congress and the New York State Preservation Program — a national meeting of state librarians and state archivists to develop state preservation strategies.

Answers to the question of what to save and how to

coordinate the effort began to emerge once there was some general agreement that a full sweep of important collections in a particular discipline, without regard to the relative merits or physical condition of any individual volume, was a more efficient and cheaper way to proceed than a book-by-book evaluation. So, for example, 25,000 volumes of American history at The New York Public Library have been microfilmed; 18,000 volumes of European history at Yale; 4,300 volumes of Western Americana at the University of California at Berkeley; and 4,350 works on the history of technology at the University of Chicago. Once the massive resources in a particular area are saved, special collections of importance in the same field at other institutions help to fill the gaps. To assure general accessibility, NEH support for these projects and accepted good practice require the microfilming institution to enter a microfilm notation on national bibliographic databases.

## *What should be saved, and what should be left to disintegrate?*

Archival materials, including manuscripts and government records, provide yet another set of challenges. Each page is a unique item, unlike a book produced in many copies. Millions and millions of records are stored in even a modest state archive, while historical nongovernment records and manuscript collections lie scattered throughout a variety of institutions — uncataloged, inaccessible and deteriorating. Clearly, different strategies must be developed to deal with these unique research resources than those that work with brittle books. Yet the importance of these documents cannot be overstated. They are the best evidence for the future of the nature and workings of one of the most audacious and successful political experiments in history, the development of the United States.

The evolution of American democracy, the dramatic waves of immigrants that continue to reshape its culture, the struggles for social justice and equality; accounts of this stunning history were mostly written on acidic paper that is, even now, destroying itself. For example, the three-by-five cards that represent the World War I muster of New York State soldiers break at the touch of a researcher. One card, now encased in protective cover, represents the only record of service for a black soldier who won the highest military honor bestowed by the French government but who was denied the Congressional Medal of Honor because of his race, an injustice now being addressed.

New York's Documentary Heritage program is another national model of State grants to identify and ensure the survival and accessibility of historical documents. That program grew out of a report to the citizens of New York, funded by the NEH. The New York State Archives and the New York State Library cooperated with the New York Document Conservation Advisory Council in the production of this report and its recommendations for preserving New York's unique research resources. That report, "Our Memory at Risk," details the actions needed in individual institutions and in government at every level to save our history. Through the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, planning in other states for preserving our recorded past is also underway. Here again, the Federal Government's support has been most important. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission and the National Endowment for the Humanities have both exercised exemplary leadership in encouraging the identification, organization, preservation and accessibility of historical records and manuscripts.

Just when the energy and organization at national, state and institutional levels seem to be equal to the challenge of preserving our research base, books and records have transformed themselves into computer disks, film and other special media. Even as preservation microfilming goes on in a focused and efficient way; even as experiments with massive deacidification continue; even as fine paper mills convert to the production of permanent paper; new, fragile and transient media are increasingly the way knowledge and ideas are recorded and transmitted. The manuscripts of Pulitzer Prize winners can now be found on floppy disks, not on typing paper or yellow legal pads. In the "information society" of today, preserving information continues to pose new questions with each new technological capability. As we look to these challenges, we have one major advantage over the brittle paper problem. We begin this time with awareness of the importance of funding answers in advance of the day when deterioration forces decisions involving a kind of "knowledge triage." This time we can build preservation considerations into the production of books and records, and we must.

# MANAGING TECHNOLOGY FOR TODAY'S LIBRARY SERVICE

*By Teresa Strozik, Hamilton College Library, Clinton, NY*

We are in the midst of the Information Age, in which new technologies appear almost faster than we can absorb them. The electronic information business is vibrant, healthy and growing. In our daily work and home lives, many of us work with microcomputers and modems, telefacsimile and electronic mail and new systems for communicating more and faster. No wonder that the word "technostress" has made an appearance!

Managing technologies is the challenge for librarians in the 1990s. Technology is the means by which the smallest as well as the largest libraries are able to provide timely, complete services and deal with mountains of information. It has the potential for constraining library cost increases but it requires planning and investment. This paper outlines recent developments in library automation and reviews decisions that librarians, trustees and public policy makers must address in the 1990s.

## STATE PLANNING FOR LIBRARY AUTOMATION

The New York State Library and its Division of Library Development have long recognized the importance of technology as a valuable tool for improving library efficiency and resource sharing. In 1986, the Regents adopted a three-part program for automation described in *Library Service to the People of New York State*. The program, entitled "Library Resource Sharing in New York State and Technological Change," called for:

- Continued development of a statewide database of machine-readable bibliographic and nonbibliographic records resident in several computer systems and utilities with the expectation of linking these regionally, statewide and nationally
- A statewide library telecommunications network to link local and regional systems, to provide access to national networks and to provide integrated services using the library database and communications network
- A strong and formal automation consulting capability within the State Library and through an information network of practitioners in the State.

Today, thanks in part to State and Federal funding and to the leadership of the Division of Library Development, New York State has more than 53 million records in machine-readable form and a union list of serials of some 914,000 titles in machine-readable form. We are almost halfway there — 40 percent of New York State's bibliographic and holdings data are in machine-readable form.

There are over 70 integrated systems installed in New York State libraries representing some 14 vendors. In each of the State's nine library regions there is an automation committee that is planning, evaluating and overseeing grant applications related to building regional databases and facilitating resource sharing in conformance with State guidelines. Library systems use CD-ROM for regional databases, telefacsimile and regional union lists of serials to facilitate resource sharing and extend access to the OCLC Interlibrary Loan Subsystem through Group Access. Many libraries, as well as library systems, use NYLINE, an electronic mail system. NYSILL, the State interlibrary loan network provides NYSILL transmission sites with direct access to the State Library's online catalog. Libraries can check the State Library catalog online and use ExpressILL to make interlibrary loan requests by microcomputer, enabling State Library staff to give "same-day" service on these requests. Libraries use microcomputers to search databases of all kinds, they build databases to provide specialized services to their users, and they participate in various networks.

Perhaps most important of all is the vision outlined in two recent planning documents, *Libraries & Technology: A Strategic Plan for the Use of Advanced Technologies for Library Resource Sharing in New York State* (1987) and *Technology & Access: The Electronic Doorway Library* (1989). The strategic plan was prepared by the Statewide Automation Committee appointed by Roberta Cade in 1986. The work did not stop with their 20 recommendations — it was carried forward by the Phase II Statewide Automation Committee, which took the 20 recommendations and the recommendations of task forces on database criteria, linkage standards and telecommunications to produce the operational plan, *Technology & Access: The Electronic Doorway Library*.

It is important to have a plan to enable *any* library — regardless of its size or location — to provide its users access to the State's entire information

resources. But to have a plan is not enough. We are only halfway to achieving our objectives, even in the area of record conversion. Progress in linking disparate systems is not moving rapidly because it depends upon the decisions and commitments of hardware and software vendors. In the area of telecommunications, we face many statewide networks and initiatives in various stages of implementation. Many barriers must be overcome if we in New York can truly claim that our libraries are Electronic Doorway Libraries.

## THE ARRAY OF TECHNOLOGIES

The information age has brought libraries microcomputers, gateways, CD-ROM, telefacsimile, electronic mail, electronic bulletin boards, desktop publishing, ISBN, artificial intelligence, LANS, WANS, expert systems, hypertext and increased and cheaper data storage. It also brought dissolution of AT&T into many local phone companies. And technostress has generated a strange combination of unrealistic expectations, hostile attitudes toward technology and increased complexity of technology management.

Librarians who manage this array of technologies have two principal objectives:

- To increase, improve and refine the intellectual access to the library's collection and other related information resources.
- To improve the efficiency and productivity of a library's operation.

The technologies are tools for achieving those objectives. Using the tools requires understanding, evaluating, selecting, purchasing and installing hardware and software.

The issues were summarized elegantly by Eric Flower of the University of Hawaii: "How do we control our holdings and share information at a reasonable cost?...In the future we will settle for nothing less than control of information and the ability to transfer it instantaneously." His succinct statement encompasses issues of finances, standards, telecommunications, the role and skills of librarians, data security, copyright and ethics.

## HOW WE GOT WHERE WE ARE

During the 1970s, librarians automated staff internal functions and created shared bibliographic networks. Economies of scale dictated use of centralized databases. Staff knowledgeable about telecommunications, database creation, indexing and maintenance were scarce and were usually found at such centralized sites.

In the 1980s, developing online public access catalogs and local integrated systems became a priority along with increasing use of the personal computer. These developments helped create more and more sophisticated users and service to library clientele became a critical issue in library systems.

The shift of the 1990s is from the local integrated system and control of bibliographic information toward broader-based networks, transparent connections, common search methodologies and easier user interfaces. These are all facets of the "gateway" approach to information.

Gateways provide a way to access the world of digital information by removing the barriers to computer-to-computer communication and data transfer. Networks and gateways will move the library beyond it's institutional walls. Users want to move between systems for different services without worrying about technical considerations or learning to use a myriad of computer protocols.

Networking will allow linking:

- local systems from different vendors running on different hardware
- bibliographic utilities and local systems for cataloging
- libraries that use different systems for bibliographic searching, electronic mail, interlibrary loan
- the library and outside databases such as BRS and DIALOG
- the library's business office with its jobber or publishers for ordering, invoicing and claiming electronically

For this linking to become possible and for the library to be a gateway to information rather than a storage facility, strict adherence to national and international standards for networks and multivendor connectivity is critical. Standards make the difference between success and failure. Just as the Library of Congress MARC format made it possible for us to share bibliographic data, so the ISO/OSI (International Standards Organization/Open System Interconnection) standard for communication protocols and the standard for application software (such as NISO Z39/50 and X.12) are critical.

Networking technology will not be the limiting factor in achieving our goal. Our biggest problems will be the costs of electronic communication, the concept of information as property and political issues.

As the capabilities to link like and unlike systems for sophisticated interchanges develop, libraries, hardware and software vendors will face the possibility of providing reciprocal access. This will bring new focus to the concept of system and data security and will bring with it a need to develop new policies and cooperative relationships. Decisions on hardware, software

and connectivity can become political issues. They can either help build broad-based networks and cooperation, or restrict them.

The forces driving connectivity and cooperation are the continued exponential growth of information, increasing demand for information from a knowledge based, service oriented society and financial and storage constraints on library acquisitions. Libraries must provide more direct network access rather than more acquisitions; they will become more interdependent for information; and they will expect people to access the library from personal computers and workstations.

FINANCING

Libraries that have automated some or all of their processes are looking to upgrade or replace systems, and those planning to automate face the explosion of new technologies. They find that hardware costs have gone down but software, customization and licensing costs remain high. Librarians must prepare to perform increasingly complex tasks within a better connected environment. This requires major investment in workstation hardware, software and creation of new linkages.

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## TECHNICAL REFERENCES USED IN THIS ARTICLE

**Analog** - The transmission of communication using voice signals; contrasts with digital (see below).

**Application Software** - Programs that enable the computer to be used for specific tasks (e.g., searching for a book in an online catalog); works in conjunction with an operating system (see below).

**Artificial Intelligence** - The use of knowledge-based computing systems (as opposed to conventional information-based systems) consisting of related concepts that enable the computer to approximate human judgement; works together with an Expert System (see below).

**AT&T** - American Telephone and Telegraph; the major, although no longer the dominant, communications provider in the United States

**BARNET** - Bay Area Regional Network; one of the regional networks comprising NSFNET (see below) with the central computer located at Stanford University.

**Bitnet** - Because It's There Network; a research network for electronic mail and file transfers; nearly 500 colleges and universities are connected to this network.

**BRS** - BRS Information Technologies; the second largest multidisciplinary search service, offering access to approximately 125 databases; largely provides access to the same types of resources and services as Dialog.

**CD-ROM** - Compact Disk-Read Only Memory; a means of storage of machine-readable records on small laser discs (4.75 inches in diameter) that does not require telecommunications capability to access records.

**CompuServe** - CompuServe, Inc; the leading provider of online information services in the United States; provides access to a variety of news and information services as well as electronic mail, software and value-added network services.

**Dialog Information Services, Inc.** - The largest multidisciplinary search service in the world; provides access to more than 150 million items of multiple types (e.g., books, patents, technical reports) in some 275 databases plus the complete text of over 450 journals and newspapers, up-to-the-minute news and press releases.

**Digital** - The transmission of communication using computer signals; contrasts with analog (see above).

**DLS** - Digital Library System; a concept of a library that can contain all information (including text and images) that can be digitized; employs knowledge robots or "knowbots" that move from one computer to another in the network meeting with other knowbots to explore the knowledge bases and answer queries.

**Expert System** - A computerized tool designed to enhance the quality and availability of knowledge required by decision makers; augments conventional programs such as databases, word processors and spreadsheets; includes shell or interpreter, knowledge base and user interface; works together with Artificial Intelligence (see above).

**FDDI** - Fiber Distributed Data Interface; one category of standards for Local Area Networks; will see more LANS adhering to FDDI standards in the 1990s.

**FIPS** - Federal Information Processing Standards; U.S. Government standards that have authority only over Federal agencies but carry considerable influence because of the large market to which they apply.

**Fiber optic** - Laser-based transmission of communications over thin glass fibers as opposed to traditional electrically based transmission through phone lines.

**Gateway** - A device that serves as a bridge between two different networks; adapts the protocols and conventions of one network to those of another.

**GOSIP** - Government Open Systems Interconnection Profile; specifies options within the larger framework of ISO/OSI (see below) that must be selected by U.S. Government agencies to implement the ISO/OSI protocols so that Federal agencies can interconnect with one another.

**Hypertext** - A software tool that adds another dimension to online networking and direct document access; allows for the online storage of full-text information in a way that any piece of it is accessible by anyone at any time; permits the individual to locate information easily, create individual data files and move from one bit of information to another at will.

**Integrated System** - An online computer system that combines various library operations (e.g., circulation, public access catalog, acquisitions) into one system; these operations are based upon a common database and set of commands and it is possible to move from one function to another without having to log off and log back on the system.

**Internet** - A network of networks that provides global access to computing and

information resources; originally established by the Department of Defense Advanced Researched Projects Agency Network (Arpanet); now also includes NSFNET (see below) and other long-haul networks with connections to nearly 1,000 regional, government and campus networks.

**ISBN** - International Standard Book Number; purpose is to coordinate and standardize the use of identifying numbers so as to provide a unique number for each book produced by a specific publisher; used for many purposes such as book purchases, inventory control and circulation.

**ISDN** - Integrated Services Digital Network; a step in the evolution of communications facilities from using analog (voice) to digital (computer) signals for communications transmission; will provide a direct digital channel to the network for the end user at home or work place; will be used both for voice and data communications.

**ISDNBRI** - Integrated Services Digital Network Basic Rate Interface; one of two types of communication channels provided by ISDN; divides a 144 kbps (144,000 bits per second) channel into two 64kbps (bearer) channels and one control (delta) channel.

**ISO/OSI** - International Standards Organization/Open Systems Interconnection Reference Model; coordination of standards development for purpose of interconnection of information processing systems; qualifies standards for exchange of information among systems that are "open" to one another because of mutual use of applicable standards.

**ISODE** - ISO Development Environment; one product that is facilitating the migration of the TCP/IP protocols (see below) to the ISO/OSI standards (see above); public domain software that allows for communicating over the Internet using OSI protocols by running the OSI over TCP/IP.

**LAN** - Local Area Network; a data communications network, usually operating at high speeds and over a limited geographical area (typically within a building or group of buildings), using private communications media.

**MARC** - Machine Readable Cataloging; a standard format for recording bibliographic information in machine-readable form so as to facilitate exchange of bibliographic data for purposes such as sharing records and resources among libraries.

**MBPS** - Megabits (millions of bits) per second; one designation for the speed at which data is transmitted (e.g., 10mbps or 10 mega (million) bits per second.

**NFSNET** - National Science Foundation Network; one of the long-haul networks on the Internet (see above); network has nodes based upon supercomputers at several locations in the U.S. such as New York (Cornell University), New Jersey (Princeton University) and Pennsylvania (Carnegie-Mellon University); operations center located at the University of Michigan.

**NISO Z39.50** - National Information Standards Organization Standard Z39.50; Information Retrieval Service Definition and Protocol Specification for Library Applications; defines the information retrieval protocol for ISO/OSI interactions that allows a terminal with access to a local computer to query the database of a dissimilar computer using the protocols of the local computer.

**NREN** - National Research and Education Network; a term used to describe a legislative proposal for a high-speed network that may replace the Internet and a wide variety of related local and regional telecommunications networks with a single network or at least help to consolidate the administration and operation of the networks even if they remain physically separate.

**NYSERNET** - New York State Education and Research Network; the New York subset of NSFNET based upon the supercomputer at Cornell University; connects New York State's research universities and other selected laboratories including their libraries; interested in providing network services to other types of libraries.

**NYLINE** - New York Library Line; an electronic communications system that is part of the American Library Association's ALANET electronic information service; primarily used for electronic mail and bulletin board purposes; available at library systems of all types and selected libraries throughout the State.

**NYSILL** - New York State Interlibrary Loan program; uses telecommunications facilities to make research materials more freely accessible to library users throughout the State; research libraries provide material through NYSILL, on a contractual reimbursed basis.

**OCLC** - Online Computer Library Center; the largest bibliographic utility in the world, it serves almost 9,500 libraries of all types worldwide and provides a database currently numbering some 21 million records (titles) and 330 million item library locations; in New York, OCLC services are provided to some 475 libraries through the SUNY/OCLC network.

**Operating System** - Software that controls the management and execution of programs; works in conjunction with application programs (see above).

**Packet Network** - A network in which messages are transmitted by being broken down into smaller units called packets; packets are individually addressed and routed through the network; allows for increased availability of network for all users.

**Protocol** - Rules that must be followed if communication is to take place; the complete interaction of all possible series of messages during the process of communication.

**T-1** - A communications service provided over telephone lines that transmits digital data at 1.544 mbps (see above); used to transmit both voice and data.

**TCP/IP** - Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol; a set of protocols similar to but less complete than and not an international standard like ISO/OSI; although the intention is to migrate to ISO/OSI, the Internet presently uses TCP/IP.

**Telenet** - Telenet Communication Corporation; the largest value-added network in the United States.

**Tymnet** - Tymshare, Inc. Network; the second largest value-added network operating in this country.

**Union List** - The combining of records of materials located in several libraries into one file or list that is integrated by author or title but that includes the various library locations for each item listed; union list may cover any type of materials (e.g., books, serials) and any geographic area (e.g., city, region, state).

**VAN** - Value Added Network; a public data communications network in which the services provided for users greatly enhance the usefulness of the basic facilities utilized.

**WAN** - Wide Area Network; a communications network serving geographically separate areas; enables data terminals in one city to access data resources in another city or country.

**X12** - A standard format for Electronic Business Data Interchange; developed by Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) X12.

We are at a point where the library risks its ability to balance inflation in the price of materials with its need to automate in order to provide the access today's user demands. Technology is providing us with computers and storage devices that greatly improve the cost-to-performance ratio, making technology more efficient for the dollar invested in it. Those libraries that are able to raise funds will continue to grow and serve their users well; those unable to do so will suffer as they will be unable to function as prime information resources. This potential for "have" and "have not" libraries is real, especially as we look at the result of the "privatization" of government information. The users of "have not" libraries, of course, are disadvantaged.

## THE LIBRARIAN'S ROLES

Technology changes the role of the librarian. Expert systems and hypertext instruction packages make it possible to abandon some older roles in reference work. Systems using artificial intelligence and natural language and designed by librarians can enable a user to use natural language in communicating with a computer. These systems can answer ready reference questions, identify sources of information and call on those sources. Nearly transparent communications software will facilitate data transmissions while applications software will permit manipulations, analysis and presentation of text, graphics and audio information via a personal workstation.

For many librarians the task of becoming informed about new technologies and making decisions on their use in tomorrow's library is staggering. They face decisions about operating systems and workstation software for the 1990s. They must be aware of industry trends in the business and government arena and in the information industry. Vendor viability must be carefully considered and developments such as the proposed National Research and Education Network must be tracked. The librarian must plan for system growth, more concurrent users, more memory and adherence to standards.

Perhaps most important, the librarian must plan and raise funds. Librarians must be able to outline to funding authorities their vision of the library in a radically changed information environment. They must involve their users as lobbyists and develop marketing skills to broaden services and enlarge user bases. The librarian's challenge of the 1990s is to find the financial resources to acquire and apply the new technologies so the library can be the information gateway and the librarian the "information facilitator."

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In the 1960s and 1970s, telecommunications played a crucial role in the development of automation for large numbers of libraries by enabling remote terminals to be connected to large central systems. During this time the telecommunications infrastructure was predominantly analog in nature, including long distance transmission facilities, switching equipment and local access lines. Telecommunications standards were mostly lacking and library and information systems developed their own specialized telecommunications protocols and proprietary protocols and proprietary terminal equipment evolved.

Because of these proprietary protocols and the fact that central systems and networks were developed independently without the benefit of common architectural standards, the ability of the systems to interoperate was virtually nonexistent. It was also to the advantage of the vendors to maintain this proprietary "closed system" to retain customers and require them to buy compatible equipment.

In the 1970s, national, regional and state networks began to develop, evolving further in the 1980s. They continue to evolve. Today we have Internet, NSFnet, Bitnet, NYSERNET and BARNET, and the Congress is considering legislation to establish the National Research and Education Network (NREN). These networks provide a mechanism to access remote systems and to interconnect remote systems. Because they are often publicly funded, libraries look to them as possible vehicles for information transfer.

Network connectivity remains a problem. Many of the networks use TCP/IP as a protocol. However, TCP/IP has not been accepted as an international standard. Networks are expected to switch to the ISO/OSI (International Standards Organization/Open System Interconnection) protocol as vendors make OSI products available. The OSI Reference model forms the basis for a series of standards aimed at linking disparate computer systems. OSI commercial products are now beginning to be available and most major vendors are committed to making such products available in the near future. OSI is formally supported by the U.S. government as a Federal Information Processing Standard through GOSIP (Government OSI Profile), which specifies options selected for implementation.

Since TCP/IP and OSI are not compatible, methods to enable TCP/IP systems to migrate to OSI have been developed. Some major systems, for example, are using ISO Development Environment (ISODE) software to aid in migration by allowing a TCP/IP-based network to look like an ISO-based network.

Other telecommunications networks have evolved — local area networks (LANS), which are typically 10 Mbps short-distance networks used to share resources among workstations; and the value added networks (VANS) such as Telenet, Tymnet and Compuserve. Even here, standards are a problem because LAN ven-

dors favor Fiber Distributed Data Interface Standards, whereas VANS prefer multiples of T-1 high-speed connectivity telecommunication channels. Wider geographical distribution can be obtained by combining LANS, VANS and other high-capacity digital communications channels.

The telecommunications world is changing as we enter the 1990s. The Integrated System Digital Network (ISDN), an evolving high-speed digital end-to-end public network service, is becoming available. At present it is available only for large customers using high-capacity private digital access facilities to the long-distance network. The ISDNBRI, or the ISDN "desktop" link, is capable of carrying voice data and video information. Increasing use of fiber optic cable by carriers further helps to make these facilities economically accessible.

Although the technical capability exists to provide information services over such systems and their networks, AT&T and the regional Bell companies are prohibited from providing classical information services by the divestiture agreement. However, using Europe as a model, some factions are pressing hard to relax this prohibition. Should this happen, the public carriers are in an excellent position to displace some private networks and become as successful in the data information arena as they were in the voice arena. Public telephone networks can become a major future force in the information marketplace at an affordable cost.

## THE FUTURE

Recently Nancy Nelson reported the highlights of the Communications Forum Series sponsored by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, entitled "The Electronic Library; Vision and Implementation." The "electronic library" concept has evolved beyond library automation to encompass profound transformations in scholarly communication, publication and research. It represents a vision of institutions without walls and without circulating book collections. One model proposes a digital library furnished with "knobots" — knowledge robots whose job it is to move data from the point of user query input, through the data system to data output.

A digital library system (DLS) has several management requirements. For example, the database that needs to be queried may be so remote that the DLS must incorporate a telecommunications system. If the data has any restrictions on its use, then the DLS may require registration services to validate user requests.

A directory function may be necessary to find where the needed information is stored. The DLS may need to call on database services to interpret the structure of the database. Finally accounting, statistical, billing and collection functions will be required by the DLS. The DLS is compared to a hotel where people make reservations, show up, request room services, seek out special services from the concierge and pay their bills.

The electronic library will use its electronic tools to create custom-made packages of information in response to user needs. To realize the vision of the electronic library it will be necessary to create new institutions and transform old ones. It will require resolution of difficult *technological* issues such as adoption of standards; *cultural and ethical* issues such as software copyrights and piracy, intellectual property, censorship of electronic mail; and *legal and economic* issues.

To realize the vision it may be necessary to develop a "national information infrastructure" as suggested by Vinton Cerf of the Corporation for National Research Initiatives. Such an infrastructure, he asserts, would ensure both continued productivity and continued competitiveness on a national basis and would provide direct benefit to libraries.

Librarians face an exciting, if challenging, future and must participate fully in building the electronic library as a gateway to information. Information Age technologies and the escalating need for information by people young and old are affecting our home and work lives, whether we live in a rural community or a city. Libraries must move decisively to become a part of this Information Age. New York's 7,000 libraries, with planning and action, can function as electronic doorways to information for people of all ages.

# GOVERNMENT INFORMATION POLICY FOR THE 1990s

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**policy**, *n.* management or procedure based primarily on material interest; a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions; a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body; prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs.[1]

## A WORKING DEFINITION OF INFORMATION POLICY

Policy is very much in the eye of the beholder. The first definition above tells us policy is really procedure and is focused on managing things. The second says policy is a specifically chosen method for decision making, a very different notion. According to the third entry, a policy is a high-level plan that embodies general goals, especially for government. The last definition, prudence and wisdom, is what we hope underlies the policy choices we make.

The third definition is a good starting point for our discussion here. It offers several advantages. First, while it is no doubt subject to interpretation, we can agree from the outset that policy is neither so narrow as a procedure, nor so sweeping as wisdom. Second, it is not overly concerned with things, but focused on action. Third, it is "high-level," by which I think Webster means both "authoritative" and "fundamental." It does not look like a set of regulations or a book of formulas. It conveys important overriding principles that can be applied in any number of specific situations.

Elements of the second definition are also important. Policy guides both present and future action. Future should mean longer than next week, certainly beyond next year, ideally for a very long time. Last, policy is explicit. Like the law, it should not be unwritten.

This paper is concerned with crafting a government policy about information resources. Like the term policy, information resources can also be defined in several ways. One useful definition divides information resources into sources, services and systems.[2] Sometimes the term is used to mean information itself as a resource. It is also used to describe the resources used to process information. Often, this distinction is not clear and becomes a source of confusion and conflict.[3] For our purposes, information resources need a broad definition: information content, information technology and the people and organizations who use and manage them.

A working definition of information policy ties all these elements together: "Information policy is an explicitly stated set of principles that guide present and future government action with respect to information resources."

## GOVERNMENT POLICY GOALS: WHY INFORMATION IS DIFFERENT

Government policies are usually devised to guide specific programs or programmatic areas, such as higher education, mental health services, or tourism. They serve as a common philosophical base for the hundreds or even thousands of organizations that develop and implement related programs or deliver their services. They give coherence and definition to those programs and tie together the Federal, state, local and private activities that comprise them. In the parlance of management, program policies are forces for "vertical integration," connecting the layers in a complex hierarchical structure.

Not all government concerns fit into hierarchies, however. Often they cross over the boundaries of several programs and organizations and address themselves to broader issues. Every government has devised a policy-making apparatus to understand these issues, make decisions and guide action. The Cuomo Administration, for example, often uses a "Subcabinet" process to deal with themes that cross several agency boundaries: children, criminal justice, economic development. This is a rational organizational response to increasingly complex problems.

But as a policy focus, information is different still. It involves not some, or even most, but all programs and all the citizens and organizations they touch. Issues surrounding the information resources of government do not neatly match traditional subjects such as the economy or human services. As a resource, information has special qualities that make it unlike other resources and unresponsive to traditional notions of resource management.

Information has been described as the dominant resource of our time.[4] Yet, it is very different from the

tangible things we usually consider "resources." The management of things involves concepts of control, ownership, depletion, depreciation and exchange that are inappropriate when applied to information. Consider the list of attributes offered by Harlan Cleveland: Information is expandable: It becomes enlarged and more valuable with use. It is not resource-hungry. When compared to the processes applied to physical materials, information processing and distribution consume few other resources. Information is substitutable for capital, labor and physical goods. It is transportable at little cost and high speed. Moreover, because information is intangible, it can be made available in any media. Most important, information is difficult to contain and is not subject to monopoly. Information is shareable. The owner does not lose information by selling or giving it to others.[5] In fact, its value often increases with the number and variety of users.

Information has both market and symbolic value. Content is one determinant, but information value may be even more strongly determined by another intangible — time. Its value is sharply limited or greatly enhanced according to when it is available, determined at least as much by when it gets to us as by what it tells us.[6]

*Huge databases and communications systems offer laudable efficiencies that may also threaten civil liberties.*

A government-wide information policy needs to recognize, even capitalize on, these unique attributes. It should serve broad purposes and stimulate innovative thinking. An information policy that will take us through the decade ahead and into the next century should:

*Take a global view of how information resources can support government services.* This view should not be limited by the boundaries of existing programs or organizations. If program policies have vertical dimensions, then information policy must be horizontal. It should integrate knowledge across the entire government and all its programs.

*Emphasize factors that influence content, quality and availability over those that shape format, medium and location.* The intangibles — meaning, validity and timing — make a greater difference, have more lasting effects and deserve more attention.

*Recognize that, especially since the advent of modern computing and communications technology, information resources affect both the nature and the form of public processes.* Information is no longer gathered, recorded and kept in one place. It is easily transported, compared, shared and combined to create new records and new knowledge, with many more access points and many fewer applications of oversight than it was only 20 years ago. Government is not using information technology simply to do the same things faster and cheaper. New uses easily slip beyond the reach of current legal and policy guidelines.

## A FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY DEBATE

The Conference on Library and Information Services has an opportunity to use the process demonstrated by the Governor's Subcabinet and cut across information issues. But the initial task, defining the scope of debate, is very difficult. Information is important to everyone. Elected officials, administrators, information professionals, businesses, service providers and individual citizens are all legitimate stakeholders. If the scope of debate is defined too narrowly, valuable participation will be excluded. If it is left completely open, the incentive to focus on common themes will be lost. For example, since so many people equate information with information technology, discussion of information policy can be overwhelmed by technical detail. On the other hand, information is so broad and pervasive that policy discussions can easily become overgeneralized and incapable of sustaining a common focus. A productive discussion lies somewhere between. The remainder of this paper outlines a general framework in which information policy debate might occur. It is primarily concerned with framing issues, not with providing answers. That will be a task of the Conference and the wide variety of concerned actors it represents.

In 1988, a group of experienced New York State officials grappled with this question of scope. They identified five areas of concern and some specific problems associated with each. They recommended that governmentwide information policy address the creation and acquisition of information and information systems, the maintenance of information and information systems, information use, technology management and information as a cross-cutting resource.[7] This is a useful framework, although it is surely not the only one. Its strengths include an appreciation for the life cycle of information, a recognition of the power of information to change both government and society and explicit attention to the importance of information technology within that larger context. It reflects a

practitioner's perspective, but one that is more comprehensive than many might expect.

Delegates to the Governor's Conference represent a wide spectrum of people interested in libraries and information services. Each will bring a set of experiences and a perspective based on his or her profession or interest. A somewhat more general version of the five-part framework described above could shape the information policy discussions of the conference delegates. This more general framework and some of its implications are briefly discussed below.

Policy Focus 1. *Information as a Agent of Change*

Political ideals, constitutional guarantees, law and administrative practice all circumscribe how information is handled in the public sector. But, for the past 30 years, the reliability of these traditional guideposts has been challenged by the power of technologies that allow information to be accessed, used and combined in new and controversial ways. During that time, two trends have converged to put enormously powerful information-based tools in the hands of public administrators. First, an explosion in government programs that began in the New Deal and continued unabated through 1970s exponentially increased the size and complexity of government. Second, the trickle of computer technology into government operations that began in the 1950s and 1960s has today become a flood. As the public sector has grown, so too have its stores of data and its ultimate reliance on information technology to process data. These intersecting forces have changed the nature of American government, the dynamic interplay between policy and administration and the relationship between citizen and state.

Today, nearly every public program and millions of individuals depend on the accuracy of government data and the reliability of government information handling. Public dependence on government information resources therefore demands technical and managerial competence, reliable tools and serviceable organizations. These are interests public administrators share with their private sector counterparts. Yet, public information processes are also constrained by limitations and endowed with powers that do not exist in the private sector. They must contend with conflicting ideas about government's purposes — requirements for due process as well as efficiency, for openness as well as confidentiality and for keeping an eye on the future and simultaneously preserving a record of the past. Since information is a source of power, intergovernmental information systems change the relationships between branches and levels of government. Huge databases and communications systems offer laudable efficiencies that may also threaten civil liberties. The sheer size of government and its direct influence in the economy means its information resource decisions reverberate through the private and nonprofit sectors as well as the public.

Policy Focus 2. *Information Resource Development.*

Information policy principles should guide government action from the first step — the decision to collect or create information or to design an information system. Data collected by government need to be explicitly linked to the achievement of a program mandate or public service. It needs to be sufficient to document the public record for purposes of accountability and history. Since government information systems are costly not only for public agencies but also for the individuals, businesses and organizations who must supply information, some calculation of costs and benefits is needed. Since so many government organizations collect similar or related information, attention needs to be paid to design and data standards that would permit these resources to be better managed and collectively used.

Policy Focus 3. *Information Stewardship*

Once collected or established, information resources need constant attention. Our rapidly growing reliance on technology has made electronic media the primary format for information that supports service delivery. Increasingly, the accountability, reliability and continuity of those services depend on information banks that must be protected from random change, error, or destruction. These also demand revised approaches to the protection of personal privacy and the confidential treatment of sensitive information. Information with legal, operational, fiscal, or research value needs to be preserved, while other information no longer needed for current operations should be routinely evaluated for disposition. Physical security and reliable maintenance and change processes are needed. Most important, and most difficult, the accuracy of government data needs to be assured in order to enhance and maintain the reliability and credibility of its information systems.

In the tradition of the systems development world, these responsibilities are often referred to as the obligations of "ownership." But as information becomes more diffuse, as larger numbers of users and systems have access and provide input, such responsibilities are more difficult to fix in one place. The concept of ownership is rapidly becoming obsolete. Stewardship is a more appropriate

idea. Since no one individual or organization can own an information resource in the traditional sense, anyone who handles it must do so with a sense of stewardship. Maintaining the integrity of government information must now become everyone's job.

Policy Focus 4. *Information Use*

Information policy is important primarily because information is used to support decisions, to award benefits and to conduct the myriad other functions of government. The same information is used extensively by businesses and the public for unnumbered private purposes. The dissemination of public information and provision for equitable access to government data are two components of information use policy that reflect a crucial, and changing, relationship between citizen and state and between public and private interests.

Policies governing information use need to emphasize the importance of information quality and opportunities for beneficial information sharing. These in turn depend on a commitment to building an information infrastructure that includes a descriptive inventory of data holdings, standards for critical terms or processes and a clearinghouse function to support communication and diffusion of knowledge. Information shared under these circumstances would produce not only economies in cost but a synergy of ideas that can result in new knowledge to support better decisions.

Policy Focus 5. *Technology Management*

Government is the world's largest purchaser of information technology. This powerful engine needs to be harnessed to public goals. A comprehensive information policy must attend to a technological infrastructure that leverages already enormous dollar investments; facilitates technology transfer among the branches, levels and agencies of government; and insures that publicly-supported investments in research and development are explored for direct improvements in government operations as well as for contributions to science and commerce.

Since the flow of information is so intimately tied to technological channels, a focus on information technology brings with it unexpected questions about equity, access and economic development. It demands sophisticated analyses well beyond considerations of hardware and software.

## WHERE TO BEGIN?

An information policy debate within this framework could usefully start with any of the five issue areas and many specific recommendations could be made within each. We might begin at the beginning and think first about the creation or acquisition of information. Or we might begin where we have the most experience and focus first on policies to govern the use of information technology. But given our history and the central place information holds in the activities of our government, it seems most useful to start in the middle, with a look at how information is used. From this center, issues and ideas radiate in all directions, but they are all related to a common idea — that government uses information, through both direct and indirect means, to accomplish some public purpose.

Consider how the use of information, especially in electronic form, has affected government functions and relationships. Information is a vital component of all government programs and decisions. In a modern technological environment, it has unrealized potential for analysis, services, management and accountability, but it also fosters unacknowledged changes in the relationship between government and the public. Transactions once made on the basis of face-to-face encounters are now based instead on electronic records. Time-honored distinctions among various information functions such as data processing, records management, research and statistical reporting remain, but the paper-based technology that once undergirded them is rapidly disappearing.

"Public information" is no longer confined to written reports or traditional locations such as libraries and the distinction between public and private roles in information dissemination is increasingly blurred. Fundamental rights of access to government information are based on the idea of a "record." But electronic databases have called into the question the very concept of a record and offer both new opportunities and new barriers to information use. Finally, the storehouse of information is growing so rapidly that no one has a complete picture of how much there is, where it is located, or how it is, or might be, used.

Starting a policy development process with questions of data creation, or integrity, or technology management would certainly be valuable. But an initial focus on information use has a special significance — it should cause us to remember *why* we need an information policy in the first place.

## A GOVERNMENT INFORMATION POLICY FOR THE FUTURE

Return to the three areas of emphasis outlined earlier — that information policy should foster global thinking, be concerned with the power of intangibles and be cognizant of the compelling forces of change.

Information is the most flexible, affordable resource

we have to apply to the demands of a complex heterogeneous society. Treated as a commodity to be owned or an organizational asset to be guarded, it offers little. Treated as a universal asset, as a truly public resource, it can be used by thoughtful people to tackle the most complex and demanding problems of our State and nation.

Having information, however, is not enough. Even if we are sure of its content, it does us little good if it is inaccurate or untimely. The three intangible elements — meaning, validity and time — need special attention. Every person has experienced the irony of the right information at the wrong time, or the wrong information in the right place. An information infrastructure is needed that supplies not only information itself, but "information about information," and channels for bringing it to those who need it when they need it.

Finally, there is nothing in our recent experience to suggest that the pace or the intensity of information-driven change will abate in the foreseeable future. Through the 1970s and 1980s we have seen government information policy far outstripped, some say even eroded, by advances in practice. The 1990s should follow a different course. A government information policy for the future must articulate principles that are neither dependent on current technology nor shaped by expediency. It must instead become a stabilizing philosophy of information use in a free society.

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# LIBRARIES AND LEARNING

*By Timothy S. Healy,**
*President, The New York Public Library*

Henry Adams once observed that after a man had been a clergyman, a school teacher, or a United States Senator for 10 years, he was never good for anything else. I've never been a Senator, but I will honor his statement and talk about the only thing I know, that is education and its interesting subset, the library.

One of the things that puzzled me when I got the job at The New York Public Library, was that people asked, "Why did you take it?" I said first I was so surprised that anybody offered me a real job at my age that I took it. But the next question invariably was, "Isn't it a big change?" The answer to that is quite honorably "No." I never felt in this transit that I was dealing with something different, or even, as a matter of fact, with that much of a gap. Let me explain that.

Among its many purposes, any university, especially one with sense enough to identify itself principally with its liberal arts college, has among its purposes, many of them moral, three intellectual gifts it wants to share with students. It doesn't always succeed. In fact, with some frequency it fails. But it always tries. The first is an understanding of complexity, out of which grows an ability to deal with ambiguity. The galaxy of studies, the very setup of a university, its schools, departments and subdepartments, the scattered research faculty indulge in, all face an incoming freshman, and for that matter any undergraduate, with the interdependent nature of all advanced knowledge.

The undergraduate has to admit that everything he learns is partial and incomplete. That experience renders the young graduate proof, one hopes, against the seduction of slogans. It should ideally give the new B.A. a lifelong distrust of both the purveyors and the creators of what we call "soundbites." Whatever they catch, it is never the truth.

A second lesson we aim at is subtler. Our whole world of communication — press, TV, radio and even, by the way, the real publishers and their books — all of it aims at immediacy. Pundits now define generations in terms of months. An "era" in our terminology may even extend to the four-year term of a president. The immediate presses in on us, the immediate matters, the immediate becomes all that really matters. Against that, a good college will wage a steady warfare to reinsert temporality, to give the young a sense of history, of the long steady process, not necessarily progress, of man and his works. Even those who know history may be doomed in one way or another to repeat it; but the knowledge of it at least makes us wryly aware of what we're doing. The past, as Eliot says, can be liberation. Indeed, sometimes it's the only liberation we are likely to find from the tyranny of the instant moment.

Finally, every college insists on some kind of major for a purely immanent purpose. You have to know a lot about one subject to be able to gauge in your own mind how little you know about all the rest. In other words, the major establishes a measuring rod that enables you to tell ignorance from learning. That's eminently useful and if you don't believe how useful it is, listen to actors commenting on politics, lawyers on ethics, or for that matter, even great physicists commenting on civilization. There are other goods to this structure. In other words, the whole process won't function unless the imagination is involved. Like "lightening in the collide night," imagination has to play across reality to make it relevant to the tough business of living and dying. We who teach labor to help students toward the sovereign act of the human spirit, which is contemplation. The best definition of that is a long, loving look at the real. And here of course, is where the arts, including literature, ply their magic, loose the lightning — so that the whole enterprise of learning can become so much more than the sum of its parts.

In any college, the library is an essential accompaniment to the process that I have been describing. Since I'm now for the first time in my adult life out of the college business I'd like to look at how libraries, all by themselves, tackle the same problems the colleges do. If my references are principally to The New York Public Library you'll forgive me — it and the Bodley are the only ones I know.

Libraries are, of course, not obviously teaching institutions, although they emphatically are places of learning. Their teaching is subtler, but no less sure, and in addition libraries have several advantages. They don't cost tuition, they don't require any formal registration for one course or another, and they are not run by faculties. That means they avoid with some

* Dr. Healy delivered this address at the 12th Annual Library Trustee Institute in Albany, April 6, 1990. Before assuming the Presidency of The New York Public Library in 1989, Dr. Healy was for 13 years President of Georgetown University.

skill the fads and follies that sweep through the dry brush of the academic mind-scape. Libraries also have another advantage: their users are not limited to the four sizes of college students, 18, 19, 20 and 21, but include everybody from the sevens to the seventies, the simple as well as the sophisticated, the learned and the merely curious. Like a good college, however, a well-used library helps its users to tolerate ambiguity, to gain the perspective of history, and finally, to dream of both order and integration.

For the first of those goods, every library, from the behemoths like the Widener, Bodley and The New York Public Library, down to the smallest local branch, faces every learner with the complexity of all learning. Just look around one. Shelf after shelf of ordered books can show even a 10-year-old how varied, supple and contradictory is the writer's and, by implication, the reader's mind. The longer the stacks, the more sharply aware each of us is of how many ways there are into any given maze and how very tricky are the ways out. If the library is a large one like The New York Public with its 160 miles of stacks, its very geography is a slowly unfolding and always tricky puzzle.

To those with ears to hear, libraries are really very noisy places. On their shelves we hear the captured voices of the centuries-old conversation that makes up our civilization, or any civilization. Here is the most convenient, most portable and, in many ways, the most durable carrier of speech we have ever found: the book. Here are all of history's great arguments. Some, like Aristotle's with Plato and Claudel's with Sartre still very much echoing in our lives and philosophies; others like Robert Bellarmine and James I muted or made comic by time. Any good book leads back to others, even if like *The Lyrical Ballads* it only looks back with disdain — just as footnotes are the scholar's shorthand for the shoulders he stands on, even if he's arrogant enough to regard them only as an eminence to spit from. Against these voices, no argument that the past doesn't matter has a chance to be heard, and the loud lament of the disconsolate chimera of immediacy is a mere help — a sour note in the chorus.

I spoke before of lightning. The dark reaches of a library's stacks are where that lightning can steady and hold — where the imagination can roam and where connectedness can be deepened and spread. In the hurly-burly of the classroom, no matter how small or how intimate, time is too short for more than ignition — one poem, one scene, one episode from a novel, one tiny detail of a long history. In the library we can discover whole years of a man or woman's poetry, complete plays, entire novels — as well as the full sweep of a historian's work, the full depth of a philosopher's thinking. Here is what most of us in years past got the sense of "putting it together" of understanding and grasp. The class gave us sketches, showed us bones and nerves: the library added the weight and beauty of flesh — until the whole body, like Venus, rose before our startled eyes.

There's a further continuity between universities and libraries — both try to set learning in a place of beauty — the long lawns and ancient buildings of our major universities — the stately halls and reading rooms at 42nd Street. But there's also another kind of beauty — NYPL has 83 branches in every part of the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island. Many of them are in areas mostly distinguished by ethnicity — we loan out books in 200 languages. Some, however, are in the City's poorest neighborhoods. In Central Harlem, Mott Haven, Hunt's Point, we are the only public place that is, as the saying goes, "user friendly." On streets where everything is squalor, danger and despair, imagine the youngster who walks into large rooms, clean and ranked with books—into everything that speaks order, safety and promise. I can't get out of my mind an image of a kid in ancient Greece, working to get the rocks out of some hard-scrabble field on the hills around Athens and suddenly raising his eyes to see in the distance the shining dream of the Acropolis.

*A well-used library helps its users to tolerate ambiguity, to gain the perspective of history, and finally, to dream of both order and integration.*

One last continuity between universities and libraries, a rather less hopeful one, and I'll quit. Both kinds of institutions share many of the same problems. Let me just pick one because it is somewhat at the top of my mind at the moment. That's the business of standing for freedom of access to books, to information to ideas.

You have noticed in the newspapers a whole cluster of colleges, and some very distinguished ones, trying to eliminate racist and other kinds of offensive speech. Faculty and student wits have been much exercised, committees have worked out elaborate formulas for what can and cannot be said in a college's public and internal discourse. Circumventing the First Amendment can be a tricky business—and even the best wits in the nation's academy are hard put to do it successfully, above all in an institution devoted by definition to the protection of free speech. What most of them seem to be forgetting, and it is easy to forget when you are angry, is that while the Constitution defines freedom as a right, it does not guarantee civility, comfort and due respect.

The same problem when it hits a research library has a different spin on it. Three weeks ago we received a letter from the African National Congress in Lusaka (still there although I presume it is about to move home) protesting NYPL's answering requests for information from the National Library in Pretoria, S.A. The reason given was that any cultural cooperation with the S.A. government was cooperation with apartheid. Let me qualify myself as a commentator on this matter. Georgetown at my insistence was the first to invite Oliver Tambo to the United States, and I am morally certain the address he gave at Georgetown made possible the first meeting ever between an ANC official and the American Secretary of State. I was a member of the 12-man commission which Secretary Shultz sent to South Africa and which wrote a report so sharply critical of "constructive engagement" and indeed the whole of administration policy towards South Africa that the Reagan Administration deep-sixed it irrecoverably.

Our answer to the ANC is quite simple. We don't think in decades; maybe we think in centuries but I am not even sure that is a fair limit. We have no crystal ball. We don't know when change will occur or how, and we also know enough history to know that change is frequently for the worse anyway. But we keep a firm belief in freedom as one of the few goals that lasts in the hearts and minds of men and women even when they are not allowed to exercise it. Ideas by their nature are not bound by national borders, even when we line them with brick walls. The free flow of ideas is a necessary if not sufficient condition for finding, creating, keeping freedom. No lasting society has ever been or ever will be built on the suppression of that flow. Probably all societies and nations have at times denied this — ours certainly did in the Alien and Sedition Acts — but societies that last have never made the interruption stick for very long.

*While the Constitution defines freedom as a right, it does not guarantee civility, comfort and due respect.*

Over the fireplace in the Trustee Room of The Library at 42nd Street is a marble tablet, and on it is inscribed the proud boast of its builders. The boast was that this great building in all its magnificence was meant for "the free use of all the people." No doubt they were thinking principally of New Yorkers, as the Pope when he gives his blessing to the City and the world (urbi et orbi) regards it generally as a 50/50 proposition. They must have tacitly allowed, even back in 1905 when they cut that piece of stone, for the occasional reader from the wilds of Chicago or even of California. Today "all the people" obviously means New Yorkers but must also include readers from Rio, Nairobi, Kathmandu, Beijing. Tomorrow, the reach may well be to the moon and half the planets — none of us knows for sure. One thing we do know. All of us who live and work between the two lions find keeping faith with that original province a solid justification for a lot of hard work.

The fun of talking to this gathering is that you as trustee exercise a key role in making the great magic work; in fact, without any exaggeration it can be called the key role. You are protectors, governors and funders. Let me finish with a brief remark about all three.

When I say protectors, it sounds like I'm talking about the keeper of great treasures. That's true, but it's a minor part of the protector's job. Museums and galleries do that far better than libraries, and no library, even great ones like The New York Public, wants to define itself only in terms of its precious holdings. What you really have to protect is our greatest gift, the free access of the people to learning, to growth, to the full play of their minds and imaginations. As the public crisis in New York deepens, most of you are going to have to put that protection into priority orders. We must serve the old, the middle-aged, young adults and children. But even an outsider like myself can easily come to the conclusion that, of all the things public libraries do, their services to children are their most valuable gift to society.

As governors you face the usual dilemma, the distinction between government and management. Your job is to pick leadership, to help leadership pick staff and after that to allow them to do the best they can. Micro-management destroys energy, imagination and, incidentally, good will. The real fun for a trustee is to sit back and watch the hand-picked few lead the rest and have energy, imagination and good will flower and flourish all over the landscape.

Finally, while I don't want to play a prophet of doom, the handwriting is very much on the wall for public funding. It never has been enough for libraries, and increasingly over the next few years it is likely to be less and less satisfactory. Here perhaps library trustees can steal a page from college trustees. The old rule used to be that trustees had to give, get, or get off. Like all Anglo-Saxon formulations, that one is a bit brusque, but that doesn't make it any the less true. A lot more weight over the next few years is going to fall on trustees, but you wouldn't be here if you didn't care. From all of us who depend on you for protection, government and for funds, let me finish by offering an enormous and heartfelt "thank you."

# TEN DIMENSIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICE AND POLICY TODAY

*To influence local, State and Federal public policy, Governor's Conference delegates need both telescopic and panoramic views of New York's constellation of 7,000 libraries, their myriad library services and clienteles and the challenges they face as a result of extraordinary demographic, economic, technological and social changes all about us. For this special report, we asked 10 library leaders each to explore a dimension of the constellation. These 10 brief papers on library services, users, staffs, collections, facilities, decision making, finances and views of rural library service, neighborhood libraries and library systems reflect their views of library services.*

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## LIBRARY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

*By Bruni Verges, Assistant Director, Westchester Library System, Elmsford, NY*

*I have often thought that nothing would do more extensive good at small expense than the establishment of a small circulating library in every county, to consist of a few well chosen books, to be lent to the people of the county under such regulations as would secure their safe return in due time.*

*–Thomas Jefferson*

On January 15, 1990, in its Education section, *TIME* carried an article under the title "Get Me a Ladder at the Library."[1] The article further carried the subtitle "Books are still king, but now there is so much more" and was accompanied by three photographs. One photo showed a young woman browsing in a subway library in Atlanta, another showed a mother and daughter listening to music in a Salem, Oregon, library and the last one, indeed, showed three men checking out a ladder in one of the branch libraries of the Chicago Public Library.

We have come a long way since the days when users' services were defined as "Readers Services" and when libraries were referred to as "book repositories" or as George Crabbe called them "The tombs of such as cannot die."[2] While libraries still provide "readers services" and primarily depend on the printed word, they also recognize that the needs of a very high percentage

of the population cannot be met solely with traditional services and the printed word. And so as the *TIME* article so aptly put it, "Welcome to the Library of today."

Programming, especially traditional programs like storytelling, book discussions, musicals and lectures, have long been standard fare in many libraries. What is different and exciting today is the creative and innovative programming that is available even in the smallest and poorest libraries. The traditional Story Hour featuring classic Grimm fairy tales is offered side by side with ethnic folktales and may be told in a variety of languages including sign language. Small children learn how to use computers and how to write stories. They can watch a Disney film and also enjoy dance and drama programs by the New York School for the Deaf. A growing number of libraries have begun to address the needs of latchkey children so that, instead of spending long and often dangerous hours alone, these children can do their homework, be tutored or join crafts and other programs in a safe environment.

Adult programming also reflects the social and economic changes of the past decade as well as the growing concerns with the problems created by these changes. In the same week the adult user may visit the neighborhood library to hear lectures on such topics as French Impressionism, the architectural style of Frank Lloyd Wright, masterpieces of Baroque music, the effect of drug and alcohol use on the unborn fetus, the impact of homelessness on housing patterns, the care of aging parents, AIDS and employment and coping with separation and loss. They can also attend programs and workshops on résumé writing and job interviewing, be tutored for General Equivalency Diploma (GED), Graduate Record Examination and Civil Service exams, get help in understanding income tax forms, learn how to prepare nutritious meals on a low budget or how to write a living will. WEBS, a service of the Westchester Library System and one of several Education Information Centers in New York State, provides career and development seminars, individual counseling and workshops on career related subjects at many of the System's member libraries. Recently WEBS received a special grant from the Governor's office and now also provides these free seminars and workshops to New York State employees working in Westchester County.

Libraries, individually and also in cooperation with community agencies and organizations, provide a wealth of programming addressing the needs of the older adult. A recent issue of the newsletter of The Middle Country Public Library in Long Island listed seven different programs dealing with health issues of special concern to the elderly, including the Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Programs, high blood pressure, glaucoma, the Medicare Catastrophic Health Care Act, diabetes and planning for nursing home care. The Dial a Book service of the White Plains Public Library makes it possible for shut-ins to have books delivered to them by Friends of the Library volunteers, while volunteers from the AARP conduct their popular TAXAIDE program. A number of libraries offer defensive driving clinics to help drivers with point reduction and auto insurance discounts, and recently the Westchester's Mount Pleasant Public Library advertised a four-session seminar designed "to help retirees understand retirement as a developmental stage of life and to formulate plans for future action." Interesting also is a new type of program designed to give senior citizens opportunities for meaningful volunteer work. Two excellent examples of these types of programs developed by Eva Taben, Outreach Services Consultant of the Westchester Library System, are a storytelling project and a film discussion program conducted at Senior Centers and nutrition sites. Other libraries in the State recruit seniors for volunteer programs in children's hospitals and for literacy programs and the foster grandparents program.

*Services and programs designed especially for young adults have not increased in the same proportion as they appear to have increased for other populations.*

While all these examples demonstrate an abundance of creative programming, we need to pay more attention to the needs of two groups of library users. Although many libraries provide programs on topics such as teen pregnancy, drug abuse, coping with stress and how to write term papers, in the past 10 years, services and programs designed especially for young adults have not increased in the same proportion as

they appear to have increased for other populations. This may be due in part to the growing trend in libraries of turning over young adult services to adult services librarians or to generalists. This trend was amply confirmed in 1988, when the National Center for Education Statistics published a report on the findings of a survey entitled "Services and Resources for Young Adults in Public Libraries."[3] Among its most sober findings, they reported that only 11 percent of the nation's public libraries employ full-time young adult librarians. A first priority of this Decade of the Young Reader must be to improve and enhance services to this important segment of the population.

Improvement is also needed in programs and services variously listed under the headings "Outreach Services," "Special Services" and "Community Services," and which usually refer to programs and services that address the needs of target populations such as the illiterate or functionally illiterate, the physically, mentally and/or emotionally disabled, the school dropout, the homeless and the homebound, the displaced homemaker, the institutionalized and the speaker of other than the English language. These programs that flourished in the 1970s as exemplified by Project Libros in the Cleveland Public Library and the South Bronx Project of The New York Public Library were made possible by generous LSCA grants. As LSCA funds began to shrink, many libraries were forced to reduce these services or to eliminate them completely. Programs and services like literacy tutoring, classes for speakers of other languages (ESOL), outreach to residents of welfare hotels, coping skills workshops, as well as publications like The New York Public Library's "Directory of Community Services/Directorio de servicios para la comunidad"[4] and the Middle Country Public Library's "Helplines Telephone Directory"[5] are still being offered, but not as often nor in the quantities needed to meet their ever-growing demand. Unfortunately, outreach services are frequently among the costliest library services since they require three types of resources: *special materials*, such as bilingual, foreign language and high interest-low ability books and audiovisual materials; *specially designed equipment*, such as Kurzweil Reading Machines and Visualtek for the visually impaired and TTYs for the hearing impaired; and, most importantly, *staff* with particular skills and sensitivity.

In times of financial strains and staff shortages, libraries must make painful choices. Programming and special services are often the first victims both in quality and quantity. This is unfortunate, but all too real. As professionals, however, we must continue to ask ourselves whether libraries should have to constantly choose between books and programs, between building repairs and services, between public service hours and staff. If public libraries are to meet the needs of today's patrons, if they are to be responsive to their communities' needs with excellent collections and equipment, innovative programs and services and well-trained, competent staffs, they must be well supported both at the local and the state level. The public deserves no less.

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## LIBRARY USERS


*By Andrew Geddes, Trustee, Albany Public Library and Upper Hudson Library System, Albany, NY, and Former Director, Nassau Library System, Uniondale, NY*


Who uses today's libraries? Simply stated, they are the same people who were yesteryear's users with some notable additions. Why did new users come to the library? Were they attracted by new services? No matter, they've come and, as a result, today's library is a much different place.

A few years ago, books were the library's mainstay. Periodicals, newspapers and pamphlets also shared the spotlight. Books, though, were the main draw. People came to libraries for free reading material, for

pleasure, for schoolwork and for other purposes.

Students, whether of elementary, secondary or college level, were the principal users. Most of their needs were curriculum-oriented; because of that, use, so to speak, was not entirely voluntary. You *had* to go to the library.

For the out-of-school adult, libraries were not high on the list of "must get to" facilities. Only about one third of the adult population had a library card and relatively few of them used the card with any degree of regularity. Libraries were "shush" places and, unless you had the time and desire to read or study, held little appeal for many people.

Libraries have always been supported by the general populace despite the relatively small numbers of regular users. Almost everyone agrees that "libraries are good and our town needs one." And so libraries continued into the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s as largely book-oriented organizations. During this period some libraries reached out through innovative services and activities. They appealed to a greater clientele with some success, but little sustained consideration was given to vast unmet needs.

In the 1970s, staff, trustees, patrons, the profession and others began to see the library as a center for more than just books. At the same time, others questioned the need for public libraries. Studies and needs assessments indicated that libraries were uniquely qualified to meet the tremendous need for information and to address other problems in a changing society.

With goals defined, libraries faced questions about how to finance, establish and retrain staff to provide new services. But the path was clear and the profession moved ahead to transform the library from book-center to community center. With a history of serving people from cradle to grave, the public library has always prided itself on the fact that it has something for everyone. Now it has even more for everyone. Here is a short list of the people libraries serve:

the business person
the prisoner
the farmer
the patient
the educator
the person with disabilities
the religious leader
the homebound
the illiterate
the preschooler
the immigrant
the in-schooler
the dropout
the senior citizen
the rural family
the suburban family
the minorities
etc., etc.

Libraries across the State have developed programs and services to meet the needs of this broad spectrum. The trend away from the strictly book-oriented library started slowly. Changing technology was the impetus: microfilm and microfiche seemed a natural progression from hard copy documents, newspapers and periodicals. Sixteen millimeter films, records and cassettes were added to library collections. At first, records were 78s, then 45s and then LPs. Cassettes started to push out disc records, and cassettes and discs are now being pushed out by compact discs. In an attempt to keep cassettes going, their producers moved from music to comedy and to rebroadcasts of radio shows. Their newest effort is books on tape. And now 16mm films are being pushed aside by videocassettes with something for everyone — games, classic films, how-to and more. But in a sense, the new kinds of communication were only different formats for old, familiar print-oriented materials.

As the new technology invaded the library, new programs began to respond to previously unrecognized needs. Librarians no longer passively awaited the arrival of people. They actively sought new clients through the media and through participation in community activities. Today, as libraries reach out, they make every effort to individualize and to personalize library services.

As a result, upon visiting the library, newly arrived immigrants find books in their language and tapes that teach English. They can also enroll in classes for English as a Second Language.

Buildings have been redesigned to permit access by people with disabilities. Elevators, ramps, wider doorways and aisles and improved facilities and layout have made the library more inviting and easier to use. In addition, a variety of services, such as TDD (telecommunications for the deaf) and individualized hearing devices, have made materials and programs accessible to people with impaired hearing. Kurzweil Reading Machines translate print into spoken words for blind people, much as braille and talking books have done.

Prison libraries provide recreational and reference

materials. They have installed collections of law books and they obtain answers to difficult reference questions by telephone and interlibrary loan from larger libraries.

To fight illiteracy, libraries work with other organizations and provide meeting space for programs and tutors. Staff have taken training to become tutors. Most important, they encourage new readers to use the library.

In the hospital or senior citizens' home books, games, crossword puzzles, talking books and books on tape attract people who have never been to a library as well as traditional patrons.

With telefax transmissions, computers and printer equipment, photocopying and hundreds of specialized databases and indices, libraries serve the needs of businesspeople, educators, religious leaders and others in the community.

Libraries lend toys and games to preschoolers and even pets and tanks of fish. They lend timing lights to mechanics, rototillers to farmers and ladders to painters. They provide job information for the unemployed and community referral services for persons needing help with a problem. They issue report-type newsletters for consumers and stock market quotations for those who follow the market. And all of these services are provided to an ever-growing group of people who turn to the library for more than books.

Libraries also offer programs, exhibits, displays, concerts and plays designed to reach out to the community as a whole. Topics range from AIDS to yoga. These activities attract the mother-to-be, the senior citizen, family groups and most particularly people who may not have thought to use the library otherwise. Despite the new role libraries have assumed, over 104 million books were circulated in New York State last year.

Lack of space, restrictions on the size of collections, inadequate staffing all prevent libraries from reaching more people. To continue their programs and to reach out to those groups who need these services most, the libraries need adequate funding. Nevertheless, in the past 20 years, librarians have taken giant steps forward in their efforts to reach out to everyone in the community. The library really does have something for everyone.

## STAFFING

*By Janet Steiner, Executive Director, South Central Research Library Council, Ithaca, NY*

*The future direction of library services is largely up to librarians.* — Patricia Glass Schuman[1]

*The key to providing quality library service is the librarian.* — Herbert White[2]

It is 8:30 a.m. At Cornell University's Olin Library. Cataloger Jay Wang is beginning to catalog *Hadanso* by Ryuichi Hirokawa, the first of 10 Japanese books that he will catalog today.

A few miles away at Belle Sherman Elementary School, school library media specialist Kay Budmen is showing a group of second-graders how to find information about hibernation. In one day, she will have helped almost 30 percent of the elementary school's student body.

Down the hill, at the Tompkins County Public Library, reference librarian Roger Garrison is helping a patron obtain financial information about Corning, Inc. Over 600 reference questions are answered here each week.

And at the Tompkins Community Hospital, medical librarian Bob Pedzak is discussing the results of a medical database search with the chief pathologist. Pedzak and other circuit rider librarians from Packer Hospital annually conduct over 2,600 database searches for rural upstate New York hospitals.

Throughout Ithaca, and across New York State, professional librarians are working at places as diverse as the State itself. Librarians work in public libraries, school media centers, college and university libraries, corporate information centers, hospital libraries and public agency libraries.

Some librarians work in a one-person library, often with no support staff. Others work within large libraries such as Cornell, where almost 400 professional librarians are employed.

While the range of types and sizes of libraries is considerable, the jobs we have are even more impressive in their diversity. Managers, technicians, computer searchers, children's librarians, archivists, government document specialists, school media specialists, system directors, outreach coordinators,

reference librarians — a Master's Degree in Library Science is our only common bond.

## THE PROFESSIONAL DEGREE

Many library users will be surprised to learn that a graduate education is a requirement for becoming a librarian. As Herb White, Dean of the School of Library and Information Science at Indiana University wrote, "...the general public thinks of librarianship as stamping due dates in books, sending out reminders and collecting fines. The public assumes, out of ignorance, that anyone who works in a library is a librarian."[3]

We chafe under that misconception because we are coping with a profound information and technology explosion on a daily basis, a revolution that is happening in every library and affects every one of our jobs. Both graduate level education and continuing education are critical components in insuring the effectiveness and productivity of librarians who will manage the library of the future.

## GRADUATE EDUCATION

A library professional, is by definition, a person who has obtained a graduate degree from a library education school. In New York, eight universities provide library education programs, although they are often not called that. At Syracuse University, it's now the School of Information Studies; at SUNY Albany, the School of Information Science and Policy.

*"The public assumes, out of ignorance, that anyone who works in a library is a librarian."*

In addition to changing their names, library schools are changing their curriculum to accommodate the integration of information science and automation, with greater emphasis on management. Master's degree programs are being lengthened to two-year programs. Stricter admission standards are being designed to improve the quality of the students entering the program.[4]

These changes in traditional library education programs underline the ever-present tension that exists between library schools and practitioners.[5] Are enough library professionals being trained for traditional jobs where shortages are occurring? Catalogers, children's librarians and school library media specialists are examples of jobs where chronic shortages have been documented. Are library professionals being trained for jobs of the future? Will all librarians need to become information scientists and managers?

Library education is in flux, reflecting the changing environment in which libraries are now operating. The recruitment and education of new library professionals for the 1990s are challenges that must be met if libraries and library professionals are to survive the information revolution.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

While most librarians recognize the need for improving and updating skills, there is no requirement that this be done. Continuing education opportunities in New York vary by region, by quantity and by quality. The motivated and self-directed librarian will manage to keep abreast of changes in the library and information science field on an ad hoc basis.

New York must renew its efforts to support and encourage quality continuing education programs for library professionals so that we can maintain our professionalism and increase our knowledge of the vast changes occurring in our field.

## SALARIES

Librarians have been chronically underpaid. Legal remedies such as pay equity or comparable worth studies may change this somewhat, but it will be up to the library profession to change the minds, one by one, of those who pay us, by redefining our roles and our importance to the community we serve. Unless our self-image changes, we cannot expect others to change their image of us and therefore compensate us adequately.

The New York Library Association recommends that entry level librarians be hired in a community at the same salary as entry-level teachers. Current starting salaries in public libraries are $20,000 upstate and $25,000 in New York City.

## A CRITICAL QUESTION

Can you have a library without a librarian? In New

York State many small public libraries, elementary school libraries, hospital libraries and corporate libraries function without the services of a professional librarian. While it may seem desirable to some to mandate (to the extent allowed by law) a professional librarian in school and public libraries, there are others who believe that the cost to do so is not warranted and that the need is not sufficient. Others suggest that even if such mandates were implemented, New York would be hard pressed to find the 1,000 or so new professional librarians to fill those positions.

If we truly believe that Herb White is right and that the key to providing quality library service is the librarian, then we must continue to press for a professional librarian in every library. However, we must also recognize reality. Such a goal will take a long time to achieve, with many barriers to be confronted. As we pursue this goal, we must also develop an interim solution.

What is needed is a creative, inexpensive, flexible and portable educational plan that addresses the needs of those nondegreed but dedicated people who work in small libraries.

Our professional association, the New York Library Association, is celebrating its centennial year in 1990. One hundred years of professional librarianship is also marked by this occasion. Those of us who chose librarianship as our profession — people like Jay Wang, Kay Budmen, Roger Garrison and Bob Pedzak — are proud of ourselves and our accomplishments. But we recognize that we must change and continue to change as our world changes, as the information environment changes. I am confident that we will meet those challenges.

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## COLLECTIONS


*By Kathleen Garland, Assistant Professor, School of Information and Library Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY*


The collections of materials in the libraries within New York State are as varied as the libraries themselves, ranging from the smallest public and school libraries to the largest metropolitan public libraries and university libraries. The wide range of information in these collections can satisfy a child's curiosity, phrased in questions such as "What kind of rock is this?" or provide a scientist with data on discoveries from the frontiers of knowledge.

Materials within libraries vary. Guidelines for the selection of materials are generally found within a library's statement of policy, which includes the mission of the library along with its goals and objectives.

The community a library serves is the prime consideration in shaping a collection. Academic and school libraries have a responsibility to support their institution's curricular offerings. Academic libraries must also support the research interests of faculty. Public libraries have educational and recreational roles to fulfill. They have traditionally provided the means for lifelong education to the general public after formal schooling has ended, in addition to providing resources needed by school-age children to complete school assignments. Public libraries also respond to the recreational and leisure-time needs of their communities by providing a variety of materials such as the current best sellers, cook books and books on how to install drywall.

Books are only one format available in libraries today. Advances in technology have affected library collections, just as they have affected every other facet of life. In some libraries books share space with videos, compact disk audio recordings, automated indexes and other reference materials. These newer formats, however, have not entirely replaced the more traditional books, documents, films, filmstrips and records.

Let us briefly consider the role of the newer formats in collections. Videos may be educational or recreational in nature. They include commercially-released movies, educational programs, or how-to instructions for the do-it-yourselfer. Videos are popular in public and school libraries since they are often less expensive than films. Compact disk audio recordings offer higher quality sound than do phonograph records and audio tapes. In addition, they are more durable. Automated indexes and reference materials such as encyclopedias and dictionaries are the newest formats in library collections. Instead of searching for magazine articles in a print index such as *Readers' Guide*, library users can type a subject on a keyboard, see the results of the automated search projected on a video monitor and print references to the articles they want to read. Some of the automated reference materials incorporate visual images along with the text, as in the case of automated encyclopedias. As prices of these newer formats continue to drop, more libraries will begin to acquire them.

## PUBLISHING DECISIONS AFFECT LIBRARIES

Collections are shaped by trends in publishing as well as by the communities libraries serve. Publishers decide what to publish and how much to charge for their products, so that library collections are influenced by the subject matter published and the cost of materials. Two publishing trends that are currently affecting library collections are the increase in numbers of materials available and rising prices of books and periodical subscriptions.

The increase in publishing output affects all types of libraries. The trend toward proliferation of subject specialties and multi-disciplinarity has resulted in expanded publication of nonfiction, which affects academic, research and special libraries. The number of juvenile materials being published has also increased dramatically during the last decade, affecting public and school libraries.

The second publishing trend, rising prices, presents a challenge to librarians because budgets for collections have not even kept up with inflation since the 1970s. The combination of rising prices, increasing numbers of published materials and a variety of new formats from which to choose has demanded action on the part of librarians. Sometimes that action is like a bitter pill that must be swallowed. Some examples follow.

The most serious problem affecting academic and research library collections is the rise of subscription costs to journals. Some subscription rates have doubled over a one- or two-year period. Rising costs have come at a time when the numbers of new journal titles have been increasing as well. One response to these price increases has been to cut back on the number of subscriptions, as was done last year in the SUNY system.

Budget problems for school libraries are equally as dramatic. One school librarian had no collection budget over a five-year period in the 1980s. She managed to get financial support from the school principal from other funds to keep the reference books up to date. The poor condition of school library collections is a national problem, too. Most of these collections contain old, outdated material from the 1960s when funding for libraries was ample. Collections containing inaccurate, dated information are a disservice to our children.

Public libraries face the challenge of providing materials for our growing population under age 18. The numbers of juvenile materials published yearly has almost doubled from that of 10 years ago, but the allocation of funds for service to juveniles has not kept pace with the changing demographics.

## OTHER CHALLENGES

Other challenges to library collections include censorship, space problems and deterioration of materials. Libraries provide access to a variety of materials covering a range of subjects and divergent points of view. The diversity of library collections has often been a source of controversy. Children's collections are most often targets of censorship by concerned citizens or groups, but adult items are occasional targets, too. The American Library Association Library Bill of Rights can guide librarians and library trustees facing complaints about collections.

Space problems affect academic libraries, which have an important archival responsibility. Academic librarians usually do not discard materials, but relegate little used material to storage areas, instead. The effect of this policy is an ever-growing collection housed in buildings too small to provide adequate study space for users.

The problem of deterioration of materials is due in part to the acid-based paper on which most books are printed. While deterioration may be most visible in large academic and public libraries, it affects all, including the smallest public libraries' collections of

local history containing yellowing, brittle newspapers among other irreplaceable items of regional interest.

SHARING COLLECTIONS

It is no longer possible for individual library collections to meet all the needs of users. There are simply too many materials and too few dollars available for any library to accomplish that goal. In order to meet the challenge of providing access, if not ownership, libraries share their collections in a number of ways. They are developing lists of their holdings on paper, microfiche, or automated database and making these lists available to other libraries. The lists are used to locate requested items not owned by the local library, so that library may borrow the items to satisfy its users' needs. Usually the lists contain the titles of magazines and journals the library owns, but they may contain titles of all materials in the collection if the library has a computerized catalog. Some libraries have entered into cooperative agreements with each library taking responsibility for acquiring certain kinds of materials (e.g., subscribing to particular journals or acquiring books in a particular subject). The libraries that are parties to the agreement then have access to a greater variety of materials than they could acquire individually. New York State libraries are participating in sharing their collections through State-funded resource sharing networks called library systems.

## LIBRARY FACILITIES

*By Elaine Cohen, Principal, Aaron Cohen Associates, Croton-on-Hudson, NY*

Over the last 20 years, vast changes have taken place in the way in which library facilities are designed. Indeed, more modifications have materialized in the past two decades than occurred in the last century or so. Today's libraries are evolving into organizations that provide a plethora of resources, services and programs most of which are information based.

Although public libraries, for example, continue to need a substantial amount of square footage devoted to the storage and display of books (their traditional stock-in-trade), an increasing amount of space is now being provided to merchandise nonprint materials (such as videotapes and CDs) and a variety of cultural programs and services (including jazz festivals and after-school homework hubs). Public libraries are among the most lively information and cultural community centers within their municipalities.

University, college and school libraries, once quiet bastions of study and research, also are the recipients of innovative facility design. They need, among other essentials, a substantial amount of square footage set aside for active teaching and hands-on learning. Class, seminar, computer laboratory as well as group and individual study rooms are among the requisites. It appears that academic and school libraries are moving into more central educational focus on their campuses. A variety of endeavors are taking place that were nonexistent just a few years ago. Activities include educating students and faculty in the use of databases and providing users with integrated programs for a vast array of multipurpose terminals or microcomputers.

Special libraries, especially those with insufficient space to house anything but small up-to-date collections, are augmenting the efforts of their staffs by offering patrons online and multimedia access to a broad spectrum of bibliographic, abstract and full text databases. Such access demands specialized interview areas, service desks and patron stations with adequate telecommunication and electric wiring.

Of course, the changes that are occurring in one library sector are crossing over and influencing the others. Although academic libraries tend to be leaders in hands-on teaching, special and public libraries provide similar expertise to their patrons. While the staffs of many special libraries emphasize their ability to run in-depth searches, public and academic librarians can do the same. Just as public libraries provide cultural and services programs, so do academic and special libraries.

There are many reasons for these changes, not the least of which is an ongoing evolution of the role of libraries in our society. Because they can link in networks with one another and cooperate to send and receive information, libraries are able to broaden their traditional scope. This broadening will continue as online and multimedia utilities make any institution's reach nearly infinite. The only restrictions will be time, money and effort. Missions and goals that were

once circumscribed by the limits of book acquisition, cataloging and retrieval are widening to encompass any number of activities — including the faster distribution of knowledge. At libraries all over the country the volume of tasks they engender is growing at unbelievably quick rates.

To enable the staff to perform these tasks libraries must be able to provide space for any number of informational sources, no matter the format. This, in turn, means that facility must house more of everything, both print and nonprint: books, documents, files, tapes, CDs, discs, microforms and computer software. Related paraphernalia for which space must be found encompass fax machines, large and small copiers, mainframe and microcomputers computers, modems, multiplexors, microfilm and microfiche reader/printers, VCRs, television monitors, cable TV hookups and CD-ROM jukeboxes. Some library structures must sport satellite dishes on their roofs, while others, built-in radio and television broadcasting facilities. Still more are featuring teleconferencing rooms that can be rented from time to time.

In tandem with this expansion in software and hardware is a concomitant increase in the number of meeting and conference rooms attached to a given facility. Auditoriums, book stores, gift shops or even cafes may be part of the scheme. The end result is that it takes many more people to operate a library facility than ever before.

Of course, more staff imply additional work areas in which to perform public services, technical processing and administrative tasks. Workstations must be specific to the tasks for which they are to be used as well as flexible enough for other purposes; needs keep on changing. Here, modularity is a basic requirement: desks, runoffs, pedestals and the like must be easy to rearrange and add to as the responsibilities of the staff keep on multiplying. On a given day staff members may find themselves accessing complicated software, fixing malfunctioning equipment, providing in-depth database searching and ordering specialized materials.

*People prefer attractive libraries.*

Then, too, workstations and, for that matter, the entire library must be more than simply functional. It must be handsome as well. In a service-oriented environment, coherent space layouts and attractive architectural/interior design are primary essentials. These two attributes must be totally integrated with one another.

Attractive design encompasses book stacks with fashionable finishes, eclectic multimedia displays, attractive reading/viewing areas and comfortable lounges. Just as book and record stores emphasize merchandising techniques to sell their wares, so too must libraries. Where once the image or the "look" of the facility was thought to be relatively unimportant, it is now of major concern. Librarians no longer believe that good service can be provided anywhere, even in an ugly, unheated barn. In an era of competition, no one has a monopoly on the dissemination of published information. Attracting as well as keeping patrons are everyone's affair. Here, the design of the built environment plays an essential role — especially when the facility is to be reorganized, renovated or newly constructed.

People prefer attractive libraries. Who wants to use a dreary one? The "look" of the facility can be nearly as important to some people as what is inside. Given other choices, and there certainly are many about, people are more attuned to using places that please them. In the marketplace, attractive libraries elicit expectations of fine collections and excellent services. They also provide a sense of place. To this extent, certain buildings have been known to act as their own tourist attractions.

To advertise their wares library facilities do not have to be tourist attractions but they somehow must stand out — regardless of whether they are located in the heart of a campus or in a shopping center. If the facility is the main university library, it must be one of the major symbolic focuses of the master plan; all paths on the quadrangle must eventually lead to the building. If it is a departmental or school library and only a small feature within a grand interior, placement should be on a major internal walkway. Studies have shown that tactics such as these increase use. Facilities that are easy to find are utilized much more often by patrons than those that are not.

The problem for the library planner, of course, is to blend the ever more exacting, functional requirements of collections and related equipment with human comfort, aesthetics and prime locations. Although many librarians believe otherwise, it is possible to work harmoniously with the design professionals (i.e. architects, space planners and interior designers). The

salient features on both sides are respect and a team approach. Here, there must be recognition that politics and money are two of the major ingredients of most design projects.

Money equates to power, which in turn implies politics. Substantial changes to the exterior and/or interior of any library require significant funds. Until recently it was nearly impossible to convince anyone with the power of the purse to budget for major renovation soon after initial construction unless the situation was absolutely critical. The political ramifications were too serious.

In the last few years, however, the politics have changed. Constant pressures for more resources, programs and services make internal rearrangement and additional space ongoing necessities. Also, local, state and national codes have been strengthened to reflect greater interests in health, safety and welfare. Professionally written feasibility studies, needs assessments, building programs and similar professionally written justifications are able to create consensus for "fine tuning." The major lesson of these documents concerns libraries as object intensive facilities. Without equipment and proper layouts, relevant services can not be provided. To remain state-of-the-art or just keep up-to-date, library facilities need capital and operating budgets that are constantly replenished with funds.

## WHO MAKES DECISIONS ON LIBRARY SERVICES?

*By Roberta G. Cade, Director, Division of Library Development, New York State Library, Albany, NY*

The response to that question makes a 1,500-piece jigsaw puzzle look simple. Even if the question applied only to public library services, it would be hard to answer, but, when it includes all types of libraries and their services, the answer is indeed complex.

First, while all libraries have some basic services in common, the services of public, school, academic, or special libraries differ from one type of library to another. Second, there are many decisions involved in the provision of library services in any type of library. Examples of some of the decisions include: the role of the library in the community or the school's or institution's program; range of materials; hours of service; cooperative activities with other libraries and other agencies; policies on the confidentiality of records; intellectual freedom; censorship; use of meeting rooms; personnel; problem patrons; and the promotion of the library's service to potential users. The list of decisions could go on for several pages. Finally, many individual(s) or groups make the decisions and, in turn, other individuals or factors may influence the decision-maker(s) so significantly they might as well be classified as decision-makers.

In a jigsaw puzzle, all pieces are significant and must be in place and fitted together before the picture is completed. Before complete library services for all New York's citizens can be as effective as everyone wants, all decision-makers must be working.

Library decision-makers include: trustees whether elected or appointed; boards of institutions or school boards; local, state and Federal officials; library administration and staff; and, in New York State, the Board of Regents.

In public, school, academic and special libraries (which includes such libraries as law, business, institutional, medical and State agency libraries), final legal authority for decisions normally rests with boards. In public libraries it is a board of trustees. In schools, academic settings or institutions, the decision-making power lies with the boards or governing structure of the larger organization.

In New York State, the Board of Regents is involved in decision-making for libraries by proposing legislation and establishing regulations including standards for legislation that is enacted.

For any type of library, the first big decision is whether to have a library or to obtain library services in some other way. In some instances a library is require by law or by an accrediting agency. For public libraries this decision is usually made by the individual's living in the community. In the case of an academic or institution library, this decision may be made by the administration

Once it is decided to have a library, the next group of necessary decisions quickly follows. How big a library is needed? How can it be financed? What services should it provide to users and potential users? How

can it best provide those services? What staff is needed? How shall it cooperate with other libraries? Shall the library join a library system?

If the decision is not to operate a library and to obtain library services by contract or in some other way, the decision turns to where to go — to another library, profit making services or a library system?

Many decisions are determined by financial considerations. In all public libraries the Board of Trustees, whether elected or appointed, plays a significant decision-making role in the library funding and the services to be offered by the library. The director may propose, frequently after consultation with, or input from, the staff and users, a budget and program of services, but it is the Board who will go to funding bodies to request the money for the budget. Funding requests from the trustees of a public library are often determined by the village board, the town board, county board, or the city school board. In some communities the public votes directly on the support for a library and its services. In schools and institutions, the funding comes primarily from the larger unit within which it operates. In this case the budget of the larger organization will determine the funds for the library's budget.

Those responsible for funding the library, from taxpayers to city council to state legislators or Congress, have direct and indirect decision-making power in regard to library services and programs. Libraries, with the exception of high school libraries, are not mandated by the State, and the primary source of funding for libraries is not State money. Public libraries receive an average of only 12 percent of their total funding from the State.

Today, few libraries provide their services without assistance from at least one network of other libraries. In New York State, a statewide library networking structure enables libraries of all types to interact easily with libraries of the same type and with other types of libraries, to meet the needs of their users. Decisions on the systems that compose this library networking structure are made by Boards of Trustees of the system. Most individuals serving as trustees on system boards are from the member libraries or their boards. Services received from the library system influence individual library decisions about services because of what can be obtained from the system. This includes assistance with selection of materials, borrowing materials from other libraries, delivery of materials from one library to another and continuing education of staff and trustees.

The users and potential users of any library have significant decision-making power in regard to library services when they communicate with the Board and administration and funding bodies responsible for the library. However many decision-makers there are, everyone fits somewhere in deciding on library services, perhaps for even more than one library. Anyone may influence decisions for a child's school or college library, for a local public library and for the library in a place of employment. Everyone can be part of the decision-making process, whether by talking to a trustee, administrator or staff, voting on a budget, or lobbying funding bodies. In the end, anyone who wants to helps make the decisions and everyone is important to effective library services.

## FUNDING FOR LIBRARIES IN NEW YORK: A PRIMER

*By Patricia Mautino, Director, Instructional Support and Information Services, Oswego County [NY] Board of Cooperative Educational Services*

This article* provides a basic overview of library funding in New York State. New York State is rich in diversity. Thus, the needs for library and information services by people, communities, businesses, governments and other constituencies are diverse and challenging for our libraries. People need different types of libraries (school, college, public, special) and many people use and support more one library regularly. Reports submitted to The State Education Department by more than 6,500 libraries showed a 1988 total expenditure of $956 million.

*Sources for this article were *Library Service to the People of New York State*, the *Fact Book on the Board of Regents 1990 Legislative Program for Libraries, Public and Association Libraries Statistics, 1988, The New York State Library 1989*, "Federal Library Services and Construction Act Funds Help New Yorkers Reach for the Stars," *Federal Legislation and Education in New York State* and other State Education Department publications. The author expresses appreciation to R. Edwin Berry, Library Development Specialist, and Joseph F. Shubert, State Librarian, for assistance with this article.

## SOURCES OF FUNDING

Support for library services come from:

- Local government
- State government
- Federal government
- Private contributions, gifts and proceeds from endowments and fund raising.

Most library support is "local" — from the local governments, schools, colleges and universities or institutions that operate the libraries. These local funds largely support basic services and meet general operating expenses for staffing, collection development, technical services, public services and facilities maintenance costs. Construction of facilities, or facilities expansion and renovation, is funded usually through referenda; however, modest State and Federal aid for public library construction has been available on a matching grant basis somewhat irregularly over several recent years.

State aid for libraries, on the other hand, is intended to assure all people of the State access to a basic level of service. Some State aid is targeted toward specific program purposes, such as services to people who are disadvantaged or disabled, preservation programs, automation or resource sharing. Some is limited to projects rather than for ongoing operations.

Similarly, Federal support is generally directed to specific purposes. Federal aid programs recognize that libraries serve vital roles in promoting national scholarship, research and development, literacy, productivity and a democratic society. The principal Federal support for libraries comes from the Library Services and Construction Act, which currently provides about $7.5 million annually to New York State, primarily for public library services and resource sharing among all types of libraries. The Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Act, which provides New York State some $470 million in Federal aid to education, is largely targeted to disadvantaged students in (Chapter 1) and block grants (Chapter 2) and provides funds that schools can use for library pur-

**LIBRARIES AND LIBRARY SYSTEMS IN NEW YORK STATE**

| | Number | Total Volumes | Professional Staff | Support Staff | Total Operating Expenditures | Expenditures Salary | % | Materials | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public[a] | 739 | 59,494,628 | 3,869 | 7,463 | $471,140,541 | $303,754,701 | 64% | $67,125,310 | 14% |
| Academic[b] | 272 | 64,074,189 | 2,752 | 3,688 | $280,557,918 | $147,339,292 | 53% | $82,892,891 | 30% |
| School[c] | | | | | | | | | |
| Public | 4,063 | 42,097,902 | 3,258 | 2,357 | $162,982,066 | $116,989,560 | 72% | $26,289,176 | 16% |
| Nonpublic | 1,069 | 10,766,790 | 1,370 | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA |
| Institution[d] | 179 | 571,309 | 45 | 64 | $2,623,314 | $1,898,691 | 72% | $580,616 | 22% |
| Medical[e] | 197 | 4,732,750 | 333 | 432 | $23,366,001 | NA | NA | $7,929,311 | 34% |
| NY State Library[f] | 1 | 2,109,165 | 99 | 140 | $10,968,867 | $6,168,287 | 56% | $2,433,645 | 22% |
| TOTAL | 6,520 | 183,846,733 | 11,726 | 14,144 | $951,638,707 | $576,150,531 | 61% | $187,250,949 | 20% |

[a] *Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1988*

[b] *Selected Statistics on Postsecondary Libraries in New York State, Fall 1987 and Fiscal Year 1987-88 Data, October 1989*

[c] *SED Information Center on Education, Public/Nonpublic School Library Statistics, Fall 1988 and Fiscal Year 1987-88 Data*

[d] *Institution Libraries Statistics 1987-88*

[e] *A Directory of Medical Libraries in New York State, 1985*

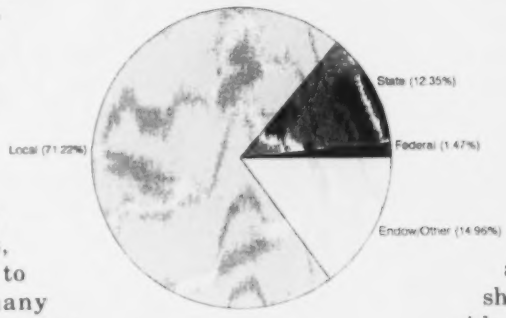
[f] *New York State Library: 1988 and 1988-89 ARL Questionnaire*

*NA - Data not available*

poses. The Higher Education Act also provides funds to New York State, largely for universities and for library school fellowships. In addition, Federal dollars available on a competitive or special grant basis from the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities, National Science Foundation and various education programs are important to libraries in New York State for research and demonstration projects, public programs, adult education and other purposes.

Private sources of support — donations, foundation grants, endowments — are essential to the financial security of many libraries. Be it an endowment that maintains a building, a donation to enrich specific areas of the collection or the proceeds of a used book sale, these often result in a library being able to address a special constituent need or offering a much-needed service.

**FIGURE 1**
**NYS PUBLIC LIBRARY INCOME**
**1988**




## PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THEIR FUNDING

Local government provided more than 70 percent of the $455 million in public library support in 1988. The levels of support vary widely. Many public libraries have small budgets — in 1988, almost one out of three public libraries had *total* budgets of less than $25,000 for all purposes! Per capita support of public libraries also varies. The statewide average per capita expenditure in 1988 was $28.69 (less than an annual subscription to *Sports Illustrated*), but it ranged from $1.13 in Little Genesee (Allegany County) to $162.95 in Martinsburg (Lewis County).

State aid for public library services largely supports public library systems which, in turn, enable their member libraries to provide enhanced services. All but two of New York's 739 public libraries belong to a public library system. For 1989-90, the State appropriated $55.7 million for public library aid. A 1989 evaluation of systems shows that the systems, which provide services to the local public libraries, are a cost effective way of aiding library services. The study found that each State aid dollar provides services that would cost $3.50 if they were provided only by local libraries.

State aid in 1988 was $3.45 per capita statewide, but the aid law establishes a formula that takes into account the varying problems of rural, city and suburban libraries. Therefore per capita aid to systems ranged from $2.43 to $7.30. There often is a relationship between the levels of financial support, the number of books and materials ("holdings") and the number of books loaned. Libraries with inadequate support buy fewer books and often are used less.

State aid for libraries has not increased since 1986,

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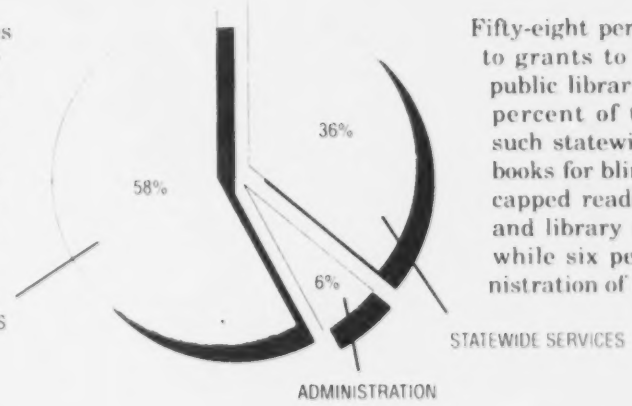
In 1990 New York State receives $7.5 million in Federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) funds. These include $5.2 for public library services, $1 million for public library construction, and $1.3 million for interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing.




Fifty-eight percent ($4 million) goes to grants to library systems and public libraries. Approximately 36 percent of these funds support such statewide services as talking books for blind and visually handicapped readers, interlibrary loan, and library development services, while six percent supports administration of the program.

# PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEMS AND MEMBER PROFILE 1988

| | Population 1980 Census | Number of Members | Holdings | Per Capita Holdings | Circulation | Per Capita Circulation | Total Expenditures | Per Capita Expenditures | State Aid | Per Capita State Aid |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brooklyn | 2,230,844 | 1 | 4,744,074 | 2.13 | 8,205,639 | 3.68 | $39,114,813 | $17.53 | $5,457,188 | $2.45 |
| Buffalo-Erie | 1,015,472 | 24 | 4,193,737 | 4.13 | 6,531,941 | 6.43 | $18,716,207 | $18.43 | $2,940,342 | $2.90 |
| Chautauqua-Cattaraugus | 232,622 | 34 | 1,187,977 | 5.11 | 1,939,393 | 8.34 | $4,281,823 | $18.41 | $1,251,665 | $5.38 |
| Chemung-Southern Tier | 287,760 | 37 | 1,255,315 | 4.36 | 1,444,685 | 5.02 | $4,966,448 | $17.26 | $1,243,280 | $4.32 |
| Clinton-Essex-Franklin | 161,855 | 29 | 811,172 | 5.01 | 722,941 | 4.47 | $2,586,355 | $15.98 | $1,182,250 | $7.30 |
| Finger Lakes | 299,344 | 29 | 863,358 | 2.88 | 1,483,161 | 4.95 | $3,640,791 | $12.16 | $1,120,724 | $3.74 |
| Four County | 368,891 | 43 | 1,366,592 | 3.70 | 2,422,829 | 6.57 | $5,807,207 | $15.74 | $1,431,663 | $3.88 |
| Mid-Hudson | 549,962 | 65 | 1,655,368 | 3.01 | 2,506,947 | 4.56 | $8,991,095 | $16.35 | $1,840,677 | $3.35 |
| Mid-York | 385,330 | 43 | 1,449,141 | 3.76 | 2,086,491 | 5.41 | $5,820,571 | $15.11 | $1,345,556 | $3.49 |
| Mohawk Valley | 288,248 | 14 | 1,035,853 | 3.59 | 1,273,478 | 4.42 | $5,224,908 | $18.13 | $1,057,476 | $3.67 |
| Nassau | 1,321,582 | 54 | 8,501,906 | 6.43 | 11,872,138 | 8.98 | $64,056,460 | $48.47 | $3,362,436 | $2.54 |
| New York | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Branch Libraries | 2,949,470 | | 8,921,953 | 3.02 | 12,949,337 | 4.39 | $65,958,275 | $22.36 | $7,376,650 | $2.50 |
| Research Libraries | 7,071,639* | | 34,125,851 | 4.83 | - | | $55,088,288 | $7.79 | $8,866,438 | $1.25 |
| Nioga | 325,250 | 21 | 1,343,688 | 4.13 | 1,689,186 | 5.19 | $5,362,123 | $16.49 | $1,141,472 | $3.51 |
| North Country | 341,341 | 64 | 1,255,237 | 3.68 | 1,420,104 | 4.16 | $4,604,435 | $13.49 | $1,461,981 | $4.28 |
| Onondaga | 463,920 | 21 | 2,197,647 | 4.74 | 3,198,085 | 6.89 | $17,914,364 | $38.62 | $1,293,634 | $2.79 |
| Pioneer | 972,629 | 60 | 3,630,777 | 3.73 | 6,474,556 | 6.66 | $20,559,342 | $21.14 | $2,842,040 | $2.92 |
| Queens | 1,891,325 | 1 | 8,383,554 | 4.43 | 12,461,496 | 6.59 | $41,828,817 | $22.12 | $5,272,289 | $2.79 |
| Ramapo Catskill | 615,080 | 47 | 2,282,133 | 3.71 | 3,483,225 | 5.66 | $18,985,826 | $30.87 | $1,845,680 | $3.00 |
| Southern Adirondack | 268,442 | 29 | 946,706 | 3.53 | 1,426,642 | 5.31 | $4,348,040 | $16.20 | $1,272,689 | $4.74 |
| Suffolk | 1,284,231 | 54 | 7,211,889 | 5.62 | 12,357,855 | 9.62 | $62,823,525 | $48.92 | $3,122,186 | $2.43 |
| Upper Hudson | 437,875 | 27 | 1,567,698 | 3.58 | 2,326,804 | 5.31 | $8,105,325 | $18.51 | $1,430,841 | $3.27 |
| Westchester | 866,599 | 38 | 4,668,616 | 5.39 | 6,040,581 | 6.97 | $34,847,432 | $40.21 | $2,359,096 | $2.72 |
| **TOTAL** | **17,558,072** | **736** | **103,600,242** | **5.90** | **104,317,514** | **5.94** | **$503,632,470** | **$28.68** | **$60,518,253** | **$3.45** |

*not included in totals

Source: *Public and Association Libraries Statistics 1988*

and the proportion of State aid has decreased over the last decade. In 1977, State aid constituted 16 percent of the total public library expenditure; today it is only 12 percent. The Regents in November 1989 estimated that $76.1 million in State aid is needed for adequate public library service.

This year New York State receives $7.5 million in Federal Library Services (LSCA). These include $5.2 million for public library services, $1 million for public library construction and $1.3 million for interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing. Fifty eight percent ($4 million) goes to grants to public library systems and public libraries. Approximately 36 percent of these funds support such statewide services as talking books for blind and visually handicapped readers, interlibrary loan and library development services. The grants to systems support adult independent learner and job information services, literacy and English-as-a-second-language programs and services to senior citizens. Other grants support major urban public libraries and libraries in institutions.

LSCA Title II (public library construction) funds help generate local matching funds. A September 1989 study showed that many public libraries urgently need more space or modifications to provide modern library services. Many public libraries are 80 or more years old and were built for communities far smaller and different from those they now serve. Many buildings are not energy-efficient, and 283 main libraries (mostly located in small communities) are inaccessible to people with disabilities. The data show that a total of 231 projects, with an estimated cost of $164 million are needed. LSCA also provides grants directly from the U.S. Department of Education for Indian library services (Title IV) and for library literacy programs (Title VI). In 1988, eight libraries in New York State (ranging is size from the Westchester Library System to the Amsterdam Public Library) obtained Title VI grants totaling $197,000. In addition, Congress has authorized (but not appropriated funds for Title V, foreign language materials; Title VII, evaluation; and Title VIII, library learning center programs.

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND THEIR FUNDING

School libraries are largely dependent upon the local school district budget. Districts receive State aid (approximately 44 percent of public school funding is from State aid). Since 1983 the State has each year provided $2 per student for library books and materials. But, because there is no maintenance of effort requirement, a district can use these dollars to replace local dollars. Although the impact of the aid therefore cannot be precisely tracked, it is clear that it has helped some school library media centers acquire more materials. In 1983-84, schools added 1.3 million books to their libraries; in 1986/87 they added 1.7 million, largely as the result of increased book acquisitions in the five largest cities.

Some years ago, significant amounts of Federal aid to schools were earmarked for school library materials. Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have diluted Federal support for school library materials, largely because these scarce dollars can now be expended for a variety of other local educational purposes, only one of which may be the school library. Today Federal education aid, available under the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Act targets funds to schools for programs for disadvantaged students (Chapter 1) and for "block grants" (Chapter 2) in which local school administrators decide how the funds are to be used. Some schools continue to use a portion of the Federal funds for school library materials but the Federal program no longer drives the library services it once did.

School library systems, like public library systems, are funded by State aid to provide services to their member libraries. All but 24 of the State's 720 school districts are members of school library systems, plus nearly 500 nonpublic schools. The State aid for school library systems total $5 million and has not been increased since 1986 when the systems were just getting underway. The Regents estimate that a minimum of $8.3 million is needed for adequate school library system services in 1990.

## ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The libraries in the State and City Universities of New York (SUNY and CUNY) depend principally on the State budget and tuition fees for basic operation. Independent sector (or private) colleges and universities receive limited State support (Bundy Aid, not restricted for specific purposes) and their libraries depend on the institutions' total revenues, including tuition.

The State provides $1.4 million in aid for collection development annually, in exchange for academic library participation in resource sharing. This aid is available to all academic libraries in New York in the coordinated collection development aid program. Grants range from $4,600 to $20,300 annually.

The Higher Education Act (HEA), once provided

major funds for academic libraries, including funds for construction of libraries. By 1988, however, only limited funds were available from HEA, all project-based. Last year HEA provided $572,000 in Title II-C funds (Strengthening Research Libraries) to three research institutions (SUNY at Buffalo, The New York Public Library and the New-York Historical Society). These grants helped many libraries and library users throughout the nation because they helped build the national scholarly database. As a result of the Federal funds, records for unique Latin American documents, 20th century poets' manuscripts and correspondence, the Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives and the Rufus King collection will be made accessible to scholars nationwide. In addition, the New York Botanical Garden, the New York State Library and The New York Public Library participate in cooperative projects under grants made to universities in other states. HEA now includes a Title II-D program for technology and in 1988 three libraries received $353,733 in this program. The State University at Buffalo received $175,746 to incorporate telefacsimile and optical scanning into library operations; Cornell received $153,866 to design a campus interactive online science telecommunications network, and the University of Rochester Eastman School of Music received $24,121 to upgrade computer equipment.

HEA Title II-B funds (training and research) once were targeted toward support of scholarships and fellowships for minority students in library science, a pressing need in New York State if libraries are to serve our multicultural society. Over the years they have also supported important training institutes for working librarians. Title II-B funds are now much reduced. Columbia and St. John's universities received a total of only $26,000 in 1988, and New York's other six library schools received no awards. Title II-A, college library resources, once a source of funds important to colleges in New York State for collection development, has not been funded in recent years and Title VI, section 607, foreign periodicals also has not been funded.

Research grants are generally more available to academic libraries, however, and can provide a major, although temporary, influx of funding for specified purposes. (Large public libraries, as well, can benefit from these grants.)

## SPECIAL LIBRARIES

Special libraries generally encompass those from private business and industry, institutional libraries and medical libraries. Their sources of funding can be as varied as they are. However, beyond the support of the parent agency, some State and Federal aid is available to these libraries, usually in support of resource sharing. For example, New York State has a unique hospital library service program that has brought hospital libraries of all sizes into resource sharing networks and improved collections and services.

## LIBRARY SYSTEMS

Most of the libraries in New York are members of a library system. The 46 school library systems, 23 public library systems and 9 reference and research library resources systems bring together school, public, academic and special libraries for resource sharing and improved library services. The systems are primarily supported by State aid. They generate some local or grant dollars in their budgets through shared/cooperative services, cost reimbursements and applications for discretionary funds.

In addition to the libraries and library systems mentioned above, it is appropriate to cite a few libraries in our State that serve statewide and national purposes. They merit financial support from both the State and Federal levels and seek research and foundation grants. These libraries include the New York State Library; The New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and The Research Libraries; two Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and Indian Libraries.

## A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

New Yorkers support their libraries well. Although there are troubling disparities and gaps in support (the 1989 "direct access report" by the Division of Library Development showed that some 270,000 people support no public library through taxes, and another 1.3 million live in communities or counties that support library service by contract only marginally), local support is generally strong.

New York's State aid for libraries and library systems is remarkable in three ways: It is the *largest* in the nation ($70 million, as compared with $36 million each in Illinois and Georgia, $34 million in California, $27 million in Pennsylvania and $22 million in Massachusetts. It is the *most integrated and comprehensive*, including support for all types of library services through systems. It is *unique* in several respects, including, for instance, Indian library aid, substantial

aid for preservation of endangered materials in all types of libraries and substantial aid for database development and public library outreach. When measured on a per capita basis, however, New York is not first among the states. New York's public library aid is $3.45 per capita, while that of Georgia is $5.20!

Federal aid is a smaller proportion of library expenditures in New York State than in many states (where there is less local and state support) but, although inadequate for today's needs, makes a significant contribution — a federally supported project often gets an important service underway, tests new methods or provides a cutting edge to service from a school, public, academic or special library, often as a result of a resources sharing or demonstration project. There is a continuing role for Federal aid to libraries.

Federal, State and local funds go farther because they are well-integrated and they are substantial, but the New York Library Association and other advocates point out unmet needs:

- More than half the school libraries cannot participate fully in networks because they lack a telephone, modem and microcomputer.
- In 1989, the average cost of a children's book was $11.84 and that of an adult nonfiction book was $31.23. School library budgets, on average can not accommodate the purchase of even one new book per student per year. Public, academic and institution libraries face the same kind of problem as costs of books, journals, foreign publications and other library materials increase.
- Over 38 percent of the public libraries in the State remain inaccessible to the people with disabilities.
- Only 40 percent of New York's estimated database has been developed. Its expansion is vital to facilitate and speed resource sharing and achieve needed cost-effectiveness.
- Less than 70 percent of the public libraries owns a microcomputer — an essential tool in today's information world.
- Large research libraries report that up to half of their collections are endangered and require immediate and long range action if unique resources are not to be lost, yet each day brittle pages break into pieces and disappear as scholars use them.
- No new State aid has been appropriated for the past four years. Inflation alone, thus, has devastated the funding for libraries available through this source.

These illustrations are not esoteric facts and figures; they are representative of wide-ranging, essential needs to satisfy the intellectual and economic well-being of this State. Like other investments in education, library support is forward-looking and must be addressed even as local, state and Federal governments deal with fiscal crises because the productivity, democracy and community and individual well being depends upon them. Information is the basis for problem solving — communities need libraries as they solve economic, social and environmental problems.

Respect and support for libraries of all types increased in New York in the 1980s because libraries are meeting the needs of their users. Both those who use, and those who fund, our libraries regard highly their contributions, purposes and value. This is the first — and most essential — ingredient in securing support. Over the years, New Yorkers have been willing to invest money in their libraries and the 1990 Governor's Conference should enable people from all walks of life to examine funding for their library services. The challenge we face with our diverse fabric of people, communities and issues is greater than that in many other states. The commitment to meet these wide-ranging needs in fair and equitable fashion is historically rooted and growing.

# PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES TO RURAL PEOPLE

*By Bernard Vavrek, Coordinator, Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship, College of Library Science, Clarion University of Pennsylvania*

Articles in this report by Bruni Vergés, Andrew Geddes, Stanley Ransom, Janet Steiner and Kathleen Garland provide us with a vision of today's libraries and our expectations for library service in an information society. Each comments that a public library should meet the varied needs of all people, whether the community is urban or rural. This article will focus on staffing rural libraries, planning for service and political action required to guarantee quality library service to people in rural areas.

Some individuals suggest that it is no longer useful to consider rural and urban as separate concepts because country and city are blending together, but changing labels does not alter the challenges and excitement coexisting in rural places. For those romantically seeking a better life in the country, realities often lag behind perceptions. And in communities struggling to maintain a viable economy, the have-not characterization of rural people and places becomes poignant. Rural America continues to exist as a second class partner in relation to levels of education, health and disposable income. Institutional resources are also tentative in most places. With the transformation of the United States into an information-dependent society, the geographical isolation associated with rural communities means that access to needed information is unevenly available. Rural resources are less than those in the city.

## THE RURAL SCENE

For this discussion, rural is defined as a community of fewer than 2,500 people, following the delineation of the U. S. Bureau of the Census.

The 1980 Census showed that New York State had the nation's fifth largest rural population (2.7 million). Only rural populations of Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Texas, Ohio and Michigan exceeded that of New York. Those 2.7 million people have library and information needs no less important than those of the New Yorkers who live in the cities. Since most public libraries serve a population approximately three times as large as the population that supports them through taxes, we know that 64 percent (469) of the public libraries in New York State can be classified as rural.[1] Parenthetically, it may be of interest to the reader to know that nationally the average budget (total) of a library in a rural community is about $16,000.[2] Like the people in the cities, rural people need good libraries with strong collections, educated, informed and friendly staff, electronic connections to national and international databanks, attractive and accessible buildings (or bookmobiles, or reading centers), convenient hours and the other services.

What is different about rural communities, the people who live in rural areas and their libraries often relates to a relatively poorer economic base, distances and the unit cost of providing services to a smaller population base. New York has addressed many of its library service problems through cooperative public library systems. Not all problems have been solved, however, as indicated by the stormy discussions in 1989 of the proposed minimum standards for public libraries.

## STAFFING

Whether urban or rural, large or small, every library requires a staff of academically trained librarians. National data indicate fewer than 4 percent of the full-time staff working in community libraries of under 2,500 people have completed their first professional degree in library/information science.[3] For all public libraries in New York State, the rate is 27 percent (3,045).[4]

At least five factors work against providing degreed staff in all public libraries: First, one is confronted with the natural conservatism of rural people who frequently need to be shown reasons for changing the status quo. The attitude often is "if we've never had an academically trained librarian, why do we need one now?" Second, salaries in small and rural communities that range around $16,000 are not much of an incentive to an individual who has made a considerable investment of time and money to attend a school of library/ information science. Third, even in New York — a state with eight accredited programs of library/information science — students in nonmetropolitan areas are often unable to attend institutions offering degrees in library science because they are too far from home. (Continuing education activities present similar obstacles because of the distances par-

ticipants need to travel and the lack of support for these individuals, factors that often drain their enthusiasm.) Fourth, a rural area may not be attractive to the person with a degree in library science, accustomed to activities and varied amenities available in cities. Fifth, while libraries only have so much money to spend, additional incentives must be nurtured both at the State and community levels to encourage the positioning of academically trained staff. If possible, this must be achieved without being immediately linked to the notion that a library has to meet standards. Funds must be provided that would be considered developmental in nature.

## PLANNING

Planning begins with thinking — about what is needed, how things might be different and how we can "get from here to there." The New York State Library Division of Library Development reports that only 142 of the State's 737 public libraries reported that as of December 31, 1988, they had a plan for library services.[5] The report shows that among the small libraries that have a plan in place include such communities as Evans Mills (population 651), Livingston (population 190), South New Berlin (population 375), Woodgate (population 300).

Librarians, trustees and the people libraries serve need to think about the library's role and the "true" needs of the community it serves. The Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship (CSRL) consistently finds through its research that, nationally, over 60 percent of the librarians polled have never conducted community surveys. The explanation is reasonable: time and staff are always in short supply; experience in conducting surveys may be limited; and face-to-face communications (called gossip in some places) may continue to be the primary manner in which individuals gather information.

Unfortunately, without identifying who is the library's client, the needs of that individual and the value received, librarians will continue to have difficulty is establishing priorities among the demands made of them.[6] For example, the librarian's tendency to stretch the library's resources further and further in assuming responsibilities in basic literacy training results from both a willingness to serve society and the lack of an overall plan guiding library services. This example does not minimize the literacy dilemma or to suggest that its solution is alien to libraries, but rather indicates my conviction that no institution can afford to view its performance in a straight, ever-growing line. Without goals and objectives, with which a wide array of individuals and groups agree, the library can aimlessly squander valuable resources.

Today, all institutions must target their audiences and define specific objectives as never before. No organization can be all things to all people. In a recent national survey of 3,500 rural public library clients, sponsored by the United States Department of Education, the CSRL discovered that 73 percent (2,533) of the users were women, and the predominate use, 37 percent (1,278), was to obtain books for leisure reading. While the typical rural library is expected to play many roles as the community information center, this "bookish" role and its female clientele need to be better understood. While waiting for further studies, the lobbying impact of women must be "exploited." Our survey also discovered that people who belonged to community organizations tended to be greater supporters of the library than those not as involved. The role of these individuals must be appreciated and nurtured.

No examination of today's library service is complete without considering the relationship of technology to library service. All libraries have been affected by technology, whether or not the impact is visible at the local level. But library planners must recognize that the typical rural library continues to struggle with such basics as paying the telephone bill, deciding which few books are to be purchased and heating and keeping the building open. The rural librarian and trustee face a sobering responsibility in determining what the library will do to serve people who are most desperately in need of primary access to information, people who have been too long disenfranchised because they "live at the end of the road." In too many instances, the information poor are getting poorer.

## POLITICAL ACTION FOR RURAL LIBRARIES

In order for positive change to occur, I propose the following action:

1. Trustees and library directors responsible for rural library services must create new coalitions of people and organizations within their communities. Major changes are occurring within the Cooperative Extension Service and one of its new directions is the forming of alliances with other organizations. So the time is right. In some places, the public librarian and board of trustees may have to take the initial action.

2. Those responsible for allocating resources for the support of libraries in New York must be sympathetic to the basic needs of rural communities. All citizens must have equal access to information regardless of where they live. If small and rural places are to survive economically, the informational infrastructure must enable future development to occur.

3. Library systems have a seminal role to play. It is the author's view that a new "standard" of professional staffing is essential for the survival of public libraries. The attitude that anyone may be a librarian regardless of training must end. While the staffing dilemma is hardly a new issue in New York, the following suggestions provide a commitment that presently does not exist:

   a. There must be agreement that all public libraries that receive State aid — directly or indirectly — must have a professionally trained librarian available as the key staff person;

   b. Local library boards must be encouraged to develop staffing plans. Logically, communities will offer different strategies of implementation;

   c. Funds must be committed to provide financial incentives for local communities to hire a professional staff person after the acceptance of a local plan;

   d. After a maximum of two years, local municipalities will be responsible for the maintenance of a professional staff position. Public libraries that fail to provide appropriate support will be denied State aid and the opportunity of participating in any of the services provided by systems. I recognize that the action I propose would bring about the demise of some public libraries.

## CONCLUSION

Decisions on the future role of the rural public library must be made on the basis of enabling libraries to serve their communities more effectively and to improve the lives of their clients. This is the challenge for the citizens of New York.

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[3]*Ibid.*, p. 12.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 10.

[5]*New York State Public Libraries and Public Library Standards...Data as of December 1988*, Albany, The New York State Library Division of Library Development, 1989.

[6]"Profiting from the Nonprofits," *Business Week*, n.3151, March 26, 1990. p. 70.

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# NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES IN 1998: A FUTURISTIC VIEW

*By Stanley A. Ransom, Director, Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System, Plattsburgh, NY*

"Public libraries in the twenty-first century will be identified as centers of information access for the community. The library will have the potential to link the individual with information located anywhere in the world. Access to the library's computer system will be available from the home or office computer, with the transfer of information occurring mainly in electronic form. Library users in the future will primarily be information seekers and public libraries will be in the 'business' of providing information." Thus Verna Pungitore, author of *Public Librarianship; An Issues Oriented Approach*[1], describes the public library of the future.

She notes that others have pointed to the "peculiar strengths of public libraries in the areas of education, culture, and preservation, as well as reference." Pungitore further adds, "People in tomorrow's society will need retraining and alternative education opportunities even more than they do now. They will need to acquire coping skills and will need the services of 'information mediating' and 'helping' institutions such as public libraries. Changes will come, not so much in the library's purpose and functions, but in the techniques it uses to carry out their functions."

## A VIEW OF 1998

The following is a view of how I believe neighborhood libraries will have changed towards the end of the next decade. I picked the year 1998 because by then, libraries will have accomplished many activities now planned, such as retrospective conversion and installation of fax equipment.

As a consequence of direct access inequities and problems, and upon the strong recommendation of the November 1990, Governor's Conference on Library and Information Services, the State Legislature in 1995 will finally pass a bill for Universal Library Service for New York State residents. Under this new law, like public education, public library services will be mandated. Every community lacking basic library services will be assessed to help support the public library system, which then will provide bookmobile services, books by mail services, or service by contract from nearby libraries.

## NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES IN THE CITIES

Librarians in branch libraries in the cities will provide services tailored to the needs of their neighborhoods. As neighborhoods differ, branches will differ, although all will be attractive, friendly places with an abundance of books and materials for all ages. Librarians in inner city neighborhoods will work with literacy and basic education programs for adults and after-school programs for children. They will offer special help to the college-bound. There will be special sections of books and videos in various languages spoken by people in the neighborhood. The branch libraries will offer programs dealing with getting jobs and with furthering the education of the out-of-school young person or adult. Tutoring service will be available to students after school, and adult volunteers will offer homework assistance. There will be programs on development of self-esteem and self-improvement.

The neighborhood branch library will be linked closely to the downtown central library. Fax machines in each branch and database computer terminals will connect the branch online to the central library, enabling people to request information on a variety of subjects. Modest amounts of information will be sent from the main library using the fax machine; books will arrive later by delivery van. This technology will allow the branch library to offer many of the same services once available only at the main library. Patrons at home or at businesses using their own computers and modems will be able to access the branch online catalog or the main library database for information on the library's holdings and location of materials. A further service of the branch library will be the referral of their patrons to the satellite teleconferences scheduled at the main library.

Computers in the branch libraries will be available for young people to use in doing their homework or for adults who wish to become computer literate. The branch will be accessible to people with disabilities and will be equipped with items to enable those with hearing or visual impairments to make the best use of library resources. An outstanding collection of informational and educational videocassettes will be shelved together with books and other materials.

Sensitivity to the community will be evident in the types of adult programs offered. Concern about

neighborhood development, waste management, recycling, adaptive reuse of local buildings, as well as book centered discussion groups, will be the hallmark of the neighborhood branch library. The "regulars" will still come in to borrow books and videos recommended by the staff, and young people will flock in after school to start their homework. Besides being a social center and information resource, the branch library will be the chief source of information about what is going on in the community. Residents will see their library branch as one of the most important parts of their neighborhood.

## NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES IN THE SUBURBS

In suburban communities, many of the same programs will be available. There will be a wide variety of educational services and college and financial aid programs. There will be more emphasis on cultural services such as bus trips to the city to see museums and plays, as well as programs that are community-based, such as historical society programs and preservation of downtown areas or on collecting antiques. Emphasis in the suburban library will be on meetings and programs, with a large variety of collecting groups, neighborhood information opportunities, local lecturers and local entertainment programs on the rise. Here also we will see the interactive teleconference room designed for use by professional and community groups. Friends of the Library will assist in presenting many of these programs that make the neighborhood library a community information and social center.

The suburban library will continue to be well supported, and most public libraries will have a staff that includes specialists in service to various age groups, with service to senior citizens the most important of the age group services. There will be a senior citizen emphasis on programming, with speakers on retirement planning, travel, volunteer opportunities and hobbies. Many senior citizens will use their library as an alternate social center, though many will also be using it for pursuit of ideas for retirement income, or learning about a new area of knowledge, or as a basis for acquiring a college degree. Some will use the library as a source of information on being retrained in new skills. Local residents will be able to contact the library's database from their own home computer, then switch to the library's circulation system to reserve a book. The suburban library of larger size will offer online access to its catalog. The smaller libraries will offer access to regional holdings through a cooperatively created CD-ROM catalog.

Children's services will be popular, with story hours, successful summer reading campaigns and parent and toddler programs. Special programs for latchkey children will be standard afternoon fare, with the help of volunteer- and school-provided assistance and cooperation.

## LIBRARIES IN RURAL AREAS

In the rural areas, the member libraries of systems will be the neighborhood library. People will drop in to obtain books of interest to them and information on a variety of subjects. An important service will be the provision of health care information in cooperation with local hospital libraries and with the system, which provides centralized resources and a small deposit collection of health care information for the rural library. The rural library will also have fax machines to obtain information quickly from the system reference department. The neighborhood library will either have a terminal linked directly with the system's regional database or will have dial up access to the database through their microcomputer and modem. Each library will also have a CD-ROM catalog of regional holdings. Grants information will be available for community groups from the system, channeled through the neighborhood library using fax or microcomputers.

With such contacts available it is no surprise to find that the rural public library will be the local center for distance learning. Groups of college-bound residents of all adult ages will use the public library collection and special videocassettes that originate in State colleges and that will be provided as resources for those attending college at a distance. Most rural libraries will have shelves of books on deposit from the colleges for use in specific courses for which local residents have enrolled. The rural library will also plan periodic teleconferences in cooperation with the nearest local public TV station, or else arrange that programs be relayed to the library for viewing on the library's own TV monitor.

Patrons working at home in cottage industries, writers, researchers and others with personal computers will have access to the public library system database from their homes. They will be able to identify and locate needed materials and request that they be delivered by the system van to the nearest community library or else sent to them by mail.

The adoption of the new minimum standards for public libraries will enable the library to be open several more hours per week and with a trained librarian.

In the smaller libraries this will be a person who has a four year college degree and who has been certified after completion of courses taken in cooperation with the public library system, neighboring community colleges, the State Library and from distance learning videotapes and programs. The neighborhood or member librarians will meet together once each month for discussion, training, updating of information and workshops on new services and new aspects of public library service. These are sponsored by the system in cooperation with the Public Library Director's Association.

## NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY SERVICES FROM BOOKMOBILES

Bookmobiles will continue to serve as neighborhood libraries. At each stop the groups of people who use the bookmobile will constitute an unofficial Friends Group. They bring cookies and goodies for the library staff and each other to share during the short time the bookmobile is there. Children and adults come to select books and there is an emphasis on retirement activities information, such as Federal program information, retirement income opportunities and health information. The bookmobile will have books, magazines and videocassettes on a variety of subjects and will charge them out on their microcomputer based circulation system. If information is not available on a subject, the bookmobile staff will use their cellular phone to call headquarters, and, in a few moments, information will come in over the bookmobile fax machine. If material is needed that cannot be supplied quickly then information is relayed to the central headquarters at the end of each stop and the reference staff mails out the material to the reader.

*The rural public library will be the local center for distance learning.*

One special demand stems from what John Naisbitt calls "the return of old-fashioned self-reliance."[2] The home schooling movement is one of the fastest growing phenomena in the rural areas. There are several dozen home schooling families at almost every bookmobile stop who request small collections of books or books on a subject that the children are studying. They present lists of books needed in the near future to the bookmobile staff, who will deliver these books on the next trip. While these folks are self-reliant, they do indeed rely heavily upon the resources of the bookmobile and the public library system. The families cooperate with each other in their use of books, centered around the bookmobile schedule. The staff and system administration plan carefully to fill home schooling requirements, for the children are as dependent upon the bookmobile as they would be upon a school library. The home schooling families are most appreciative of the service, and they are strong advocates for county support for the public library system and make sure to voice their approval at county budget hearings.

The neighborhood concept of the bookmobile will be further enhanced during warm weather when the system's traveling librarian or bookmobile staff will arrange to have grant funded programs for each of the stops. This may be a storyteller, a puppeteer, or a magician who teaches magic tricks. There will also be system sponsored summer reading programs, and parents and bookmobile staff will have short and lively discussions of books for their children to read. The children will be requesting books for the summer reading program. These programs are done cooperatively all over New York State, and each system usually purchases enough materials for all of its member libraries and bookmobiles stops to join the summer reading program. The neighborhood library concept means that this friendly group of people meet and talk together, based upon their involvement with a bookmobile stop or a local public library. The people in the community watch out for each other and for their reading interests, and many come with carts and sleds to fill with books that are shared with nearby or homebound neighbors. The cottage industry folks also rely heavily upon the bookmobile for such things as crafts and marketing information. Patrons often join together to have discussions on topics of interest or on popular books. In this way the bookmobile staff can encourage a collecting group or a group interested in worldwide hunger to get together and discuss their concerns at the library or in the community with assistance from bookmobile services.

## NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Each of the rural, suburban and city branch libraries will be accessible and will have a variety of materials to assist people with disabilities. The new

electronic, visual and auditory equipment, such as for that for people with hearing impairments, will be available. Talking books and more extensive material are available and will continue to be requested from the public library system or from the State Library in Albany. In 1989, almost 48 percent (284 out of 739) main libraries and uncounted numbers of branches were not accessible by people with disabilities and 12 percent (85 libraries) had no restrooms but, in 1998, each library will also have available a restroom equipped for a person in a wheelchair.

## FACTORS IN SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES

The success of the neighborhood library will depend in great part upon the services available to it from systems and the statewide electronic network. The central library and system headquarters staff must concentrate on providing timely and efficient services to the neighborhood library. This library will depend upon the larger resources and services of the central and system libraries. The system will also need to provide professional printing and art work and increased amounts of public relations materials and services. These are needed to make the local library or bookmobile more attractive and to do a better job of informing patrons.

All of these types of neighborhood libraries will have several factors in common. One is that they will all be accessible by people with disabilities and will offer materials they particularly need. Another is that they will be widely interconnected to libraries of other types, such as school, academic and special libraries, as well as to libraries of the same type. Neighborhood libraries and bookmobiles will be connected electronically to the system or central libraries. The connection will be swift and information will be relayed within the hour to libraries with waiting patrons. A third factor is that all materials will have been recorded on a common database so that any bookmobile or library of any type or size will have the same information on titles and locations of materials available to them. Finally, thanks to the public, school and regional library system delivery services, and also fax machines, the materials can be delivered speedily and at little or no cost to the borrower. These factors contribute to the success of the neighborhood library as a window on the world and the electronic doorway to information. The neighborhood library will serve the larger purposes of the neighborhood and offer ever increasing reasons for the neighbors to utilize and congregate at the central information spot — the neighborhood library, branch, or bookmobile.

The "high tech" of our libraries and bookmobiles will be balanced by the growing trend to "high touch" to counter the "electronification" of our society. Patrons should expect speedy and efficient high-tech services, but these must not be the services of trained robots. People want to meet and talk with each other and with the library staff in a friendly, permissive, comfortable, attractive, noncommercial atmosphere — exactly what the neighborhood library should provide. A successful neighborhood library will be a place where "high touch" is evident. The librarians will be warm, friendly and welcoming. Each library will attempt to promote the "neighborhood library" concept, which has great appeal to community residents. Public library staff will be encouraged to recognize people as individuals, with names, and who may sometimes need sympathy, understanding and concern. The neighborhood library staff will both give information requested and offer referrals. The library staff may need to assume an advocacy role, with follow up as needed, to make sure the patron is helped or satisfied.

These, the concern for the individual and the creation of a warm and welcoming atmosphere, in addition to extensive, electronically based information services, will be the most important factors of all in the success of the neighborhood library of 1998, whether it be a busy branch library, modern suburban library, small rural public library or large red bookmobile.

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# A 1990s VIEW OF LIBRARY SYSTEMS

*By Robert Wedgeworth, Dean, School of Library Service, Columbia University*

Nearly every library in New York State is related to other libraries in the State by means of a library system. Library systems are administrative organizations established to carry out activities that support local libraries above and beyond their capabilities or by pooling resources to be more cost effective.

There are 23 systems serving public libraries, 9 systems serving academic and special libraries while 46 systems serve school libraries. All together these systems serve 4,593 member libraries in the State. More than $70 million annually was channeled through these systems in State aid to library service in 1988.

Whom do these systems serve? Who manages them? What services do they provide? Who pays for their support? These and other questions were raised in the course of a two-year study of New York State library systems completed in mid-1989. Carried out by King Research, Inc. under the auspices of the Division of Library Development, in the State Education Department, the study provided the first detailed look at library systems in the State since the 1960s.

In general, library systems serve libraries and not library users directly. Some systems do collective buying and processing of materials to reduce the costs by buying in large quantities. Some systems make it possible for libraries to borrow materials from each other. Other systems help their member libraries apply for grants and administer them. There are some special services that are provided directly to library users by systems. Examples of these may be books by mail or telephone reference service. King Research identified over 117 different services offered by at least one library system in the State. Taken together the services of library systems expand the capabilities of individual libraries and reduce the cost of operating local libraries. Indeed, many local public libraries might have disappeared if not for library systems.

Library systems are governed by trustees drawn largely from the member libraries. Therefore, the systems can be responsive to the needs of individual libraries even as they operate within the program priorities established by the State Legislature.

Day-to-day activities of library systems are managed by library professionals, as are the daily activities of libraries. System board members are generally lay directors of member libraries although the King study found support for allowing library directors to serve on member boards.

Library systems in New York State lack sufficient funds to carry out all of the functions their members need and want. King also found that funding formulas in the system aid law currently do not reflect the actual cost of services as much as they should. School library systems as the most recent type of library system established (1984) are the most underfunded. Yet the study demonstrated that the State achieves great leverage of its State aid by funding these systems. Information from the study will enable library systems to identify where they can achieve economies of scale, thereby stretching the State aid dollar even further.

For the average New York state resident, most of the system's services are unseen. Does it matter that the book or article needed for a high school science fair project came from a neighboring school district? Does one need to know that the library system applied for and administers the grant that provides this year's summer reading program? Does it matter that the public library system organized the travelling exhibit for Black History Month from the collections of five academic and public libraries.

Library systems have not changed what libraries do. However, they have dramatically expanded how much each library can do for its primary clientele. Systems have accomplished this by supporting a fundamental principle of library service in North America — library cooperation. Through library systems, individual libraries share resources, share staff expertise and share the cost burden of bringing information services to the 17.5 million residents of the State. But there are still significant levels of unmet needs for information that libraries can provide.

School library systems have the potential to be of greater assistance to building level librarians so that they can become more active participants in teaching and learning processes. The study indicates that school library systems are as understaffed as school libraries, thereby compounding the frustration of both operations.

Currently school library systems cannot provide services they are mandated to provide and they could offer cost savings by aggregating services now being performed at the building level.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the 1989 study of library systems in New York State may be the

development of statistics that can be used to monitor and evaluate the performance of systems in providing services and in meeting the needs of member libraries. Certainly, the State has a baseline against which to measure future developments. Policy issues that will affect library systems and the libraries they serve include the role of libraries in support of education, business productivity, health and citizenship. Each of these issues has an information component that can be specified and incorporated into the mandate of the library systems serving the State. The State through its aid to library systems, has created a large capacity to deliver information services. The systems have addressed the need to serve its member libraries. The question is whether it is appropriate for the State to have needs and priorities for library systems and libraries that focus on social problems rather than the mechanics of the process. By the time the next study of library systems in New York is authorized, perhaps we will be able to embrace this question.

## JOHNSON ON LIBRARIES AND THE ECONOMY

New York State has a comparative advantage over the rest of the United States in library facilities. It also has a large comparative advantage in libraries compared to all other states in this region of the country. New York has the largest number of public libraries (783), including the largest number with book budgets over $25,000. It also has the largest number of college and university libraries and the largest number of both law and medical libraries. These facts are only the beginning. They do not take account of New York's unique advantage in special collections, institutional libraries, and the developing network for information retrieval.

However, surrounding states are improving their libraries, and New Jersey's prospective state income tax is expected to contribute substantially to the improvement of its library system.

It is foolish for New York to endanger the superiority of its library system. It is particularly important to maintain the quality of New York City's research collections since they are used and needed by the many resident service industries who can readily pay for library use.

The library system helps to attract more of the information related industries. They are highly desirable nonpolluting industries, employing highly skilled, well-paid professionals, and they in turn help to attract other technologically sophisticated firms. These firms and their highly productive labor force will be willing to locate in and remain in this State only if the level of excellence of cultural institutions, particularly libraries, is maintained. For the cost of doing business in New York State is high and is likely to remain so. Furthermore, such firms will support the libraries, both directly and through improving the tax base. An improved tax base lowers the fiscal pressure on the State and permits it to expand its budget for public services.

It seems indisputable that the cost of maintaining excellence in libraries is much less than the cost of not doing so. The New York State library system is a unique, nonreplaceable capital stock. If it is allowed to decline, industries and people who depend on it will eventually leave, and the financial and cultural benefits of its presence will be lost. — *The Impact of the Economy on Libraries and the Impact of Libraries on the Economy of New York State*, prepared by Shirley B. Johnson, Associate Professor of Economics, Vassar College and Senior Research Associate, The Center for Policy Research (a position paper for the 1978 Governor's Conference on Libraries, March 1978).

# PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES FOR A DIVERSE PEOPLE: THE ROLES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT A POSITION PAPER

On September 21-24, 1989, in a meeting in Chicago supported by the American Library Association (ALA), the ALA World Book Goal Award, OCLC, Inc. and Turner Subscriptions A Faxon Company, 24 library leaders explored this concept in relationship to the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services and produced the following document for discussion and reaction by the profession and those served by it. The intent was to develop a position paper regarding the most appropriate roles for the Federal government in supporting public libraries. We expect that other groups will develop similar papers on Federal roles for other types of libraries and library services.

The paper was disseminated widely, including publication in *American Libraries* and distribution during the 1990 Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association. A hearing was held on Monday, January 8, 1990, with many groups and individuals submitting comments and presenting testimony. The document was revised to reflect this input.

We are a remarkable and rapidly changing country of 250 million people, strengthened by the involvement of our citizens, shaped by cultural diversity and individual initiative, and nurtured by a climate of freedom of mind, thought, and expression. Senator Jacob Javits used his public library to grow from a tenement kid to a national Political leader. James Baldwin found freedom in his branch library when he discovered Dickens and Dostoyevsky. The leaders of tomorrow are the kids of today in homeless shelters, migrant worker camps, and middle class suburban homes. They live in our smallest communities and in our cities; they come not only from Plains and Chicago, but also from Vietnam, Mexico, Poland, and Chad. What is needed to enable today's public libraries to reach and expand the minds of the Javitses and the Baldwins of the next generation?

As the agenda of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services suggests, our future depends on a literate, learning population; a healthy economy; and effective participation on the part of all citizens. We face, however, some overriding national problems: illiteracy, drug abuse, homelessness, youth at risk, discrimination, a diminishingly skilled work force, escalating health care costs, and conflicts generated by intolerance and misunderstanding. We also face new challenges: older concepts of majority and minority cultures are becoming obsolete; the very notion of family itself is being redefined; rapidly changing technology is presenting both opportunities and barriers. We as a people need to act: we must deal with social issues involving requirements for equity and justice for an ethnically and culturally diverse population; our education system cries out for attention. Solutions demand our best imagination, thinking, and leadership. Keys to solving our problems include valuing diversity, taking control of our lives, and creating coalitions to shape our future.

## THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

For the past century and a half, one way that American society has responded to perceived social needs is by creating and supporting public library services. Public libraries have sought to make a difference, and many have imaginatively served persons from all walks of life, each with individual needs. Service, however, has not been universal because of varying local conditions and expectations. Shaped by an industrial economy, the public library is now faced by the challenges of serving people in a global, service economy.

Over time, local governments extended public library service across the continent from sites on the East coast to those of the West. In 1956, the Federal government lent its aid to extend service to hitherto unserved areas in the vast land mass of the United States. Today the challenge of the Federal government is no longer limited to the imperatives of territory but embraces instead the limitless frontier, the frontier of knowledge.

Although primarily funded and controlled by local government, public libraries need the Federal government in partnership with the states to help ensure that Americans have access to a full range of information and knowledge resources in the century ahead. Information will be even more critical in the effective performance of Americans as parents, students, and consumers; as workers and managers; and as partici-

pants in a demanding world in which fluidity and change will be constants. The ability of all our people to be informed as decision makers will continue to be crucial to the fulfillment of our democratic society.

Our public libraries began with a delivery system based on circulating books and ideas in a given geographic community; with Federal aid over the last 25 years, many libraries broadened their scope and shared resources. Today's public libraries and increasingly those of the future must be enabled to function within a nationwide and even global information infrastructure. In a world increasingly dependent upon knowledge and the ability to acquire it, the problems of those with limited access to information will only be exacerbated. For the common good of the commonwealth, it is essential that there be a partnership of state, local, and Federal governments in assuring that all citizens can participate in the knowledge economy, the information society, and the life of the mind. On the national agenda, America's investment in its public libraries is an imperative.

## THE FEDERAL ROLES

The Federal government is an important partner in accomplishing the objective that all people be served well by a public library. A Federal role in support of an informed public is appropriate to:

- Ensure that constitutional protection of intellectual freedom, civil rights, and other legal rights is universally available — such as protection of the right to read and privacy of information.
- Address critical national needs — such as support for literacy programs, services for children and youth, and provision of multicultural, multilingual materials and services.
- Provide benefits across political jurisdictions and international boundaries and in all parts of the nation, rural and urban — such as support for research and cooperation among libraries.
- Leverage state and local funds — such as the matching requirements for public library construction funds (LSCA Title II).
- Address information infrastructure issues — such as electronic highways to support equitable information access.
- Forge coalitions for the public good — such as provision of library resources and materials to local day-care programs.
- Serve special populations that only reach critical mass at the national level — such as the blind and physically handicapped.
- Serve populations for which the Federal government has a particular responsibility — such as American Indians and persons in the armed services.
- Implement Federal policies on a wide spectrum of national issues — such as encouraging the creation and dissemination of information through copyright legislation.
- Disseminate Federal information — such as the distribution of Federal documents in print and electronic formats through public libraries.
- Support programs that are more cost effective at the national level — such as the development of national bibliographic standards and the collection of library statistics.
- Encourage programs that benefit all libraries — such as the humanities projects in libraries and education of librarians.

These various Federal roles have added and continue to add to the enrichment and advancement of the American public, offering them greater opportunities for education, enlightenment, and cultural enrichment. To further enable the public library to provide such opportunities, it is necessary both to continue the present support afforded by the Federal government and to develop new programs needed to respond effectively in a societally and technologically changed environment.

## ACTIONS

Therefore, we strongly recommend that

1. Congress reauthorize in 1994 the Library Services and Construction Act expanded and funded to reflect the critical needs of special populations and the employment of emerging technologies to link libraries more effectively with users.
2. Congress continue, expand, and fund those Federal programs that benefit public library users both directly and indirectly. The results of these programs include the following:
   - access to specialized national programs provided through the Library of Congress, including the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, distribution of bibliographic records, and development of national and international bibliographic standards;
   - access to specialized national resources, such as the National Library of Medicine;
   - availability of government information through Federal depository programs and the Government Printing Office;
   - cost-effective delivery of library materials through preferential postal rates;

- support for diverse cultural and educational programs by the National Endowment for the Humanities;
- national compilation and publication of library statistics that assist in evaluation and planning;

3. Congress direct Federal agencies to use the nationwide network of public libraries as well as the depository library system to disseminate information people need to address and solve critical national problems.
4. Congress allocate to public libraries a percentage of the funds appropriated to address such pressing national concerns as drug abuse, literacy, youth at risk, and an aging population.
5. Congress enact legislation authorizing an Assistant Secretary of Education for Library and Information Services to administer Federal library programs and policies and to coordinate with the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, the Library of Congress, the other national libraries, and relevant Federal agencies.

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# TWELVE YEARS AGO

Following are excepts from *Meeting People's Needs*, the report of the June 1978 New York State Governor's Conference on Libraries.[1] That report included articles that appeared at the time in The New York Times and American Libraries, both reprinted here. These reports were written within days or weeks after the June 1978 conference. In 1987, Joseph F. Shubert testified before the United States Senate Subcommittee on Education, Art, and Humanities in behalf of Senate Joint Resolution 26 authorizing a While House Conference on Library and Information Services. In that testimony, with the perspective of nine years, Mr. Shubert pointed out that the New York State Conference produced change in New York State.[2] He described a "set of actions" and legislative enactments in 1978, 1981, 1984 and 1986 designed to assure library services to all the people of New York State. He pointed out that "none of these enactments has provided all the resources our libraries need to meet the demands of the people they serve, but they have enabled us to:

- more than double the number of libraries participating in our regional and statewide systems
- bring 264 hospital libraries into regional resource sharing and enable more than half of these libraries to upgrade service in accordance with new standards developed in 1982
- expand outreach services to blind and disabled people, persons in institutions, disadvantaged persons, and job seekers
- institute a statewide program for the conservation of deteriorating research materials
- increase computerized records of library holdings from 4 million records in 1979 to 24 million records today [April 1987]
- increase public library use from some 79 million items loaned in 1978 to an anticipated 99 million this year [1987]."

## REFERENCES


1 New York State Governor's Conference on Libraries, *Meeting Information Needs: New York State Governor's Conference on Libraries*, October 1978, 20 p.

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## Citizens and Librarians Gather to Benefit Users

"Meeting People's Needs"—with this purpose as their theme, 264 delegates and 260 observers gathered in Albany June 5-7, 1978 for the Governor's Conference on Libraries. They ranged in age from 12 to post-retirement, came from every part of the state, and represented a variety of vocations and interests.

Debate and action focused on benefits to the library user and potential user. Two-thirds of the delegates represented these groups for this true citizens' conference. Only one-third were library staff or library policy-makers.

The dramatic new Empire State Plaza was an appropriate background for intense discussion on the *future* library needs of New York State. But delegates demonstrated by their resolutions their awareness that governments *today* have few funds for luxuries. In fact, during the conference the New York State Legislature still was considering a major library omnibus bill which would benefit users of all types of libraries and promote library cooperation.

The conference planners were the 29 members of the Governor's Commission on Libraries whom Governor Hugh L. Carey had appointed in 1976. Edwin Newman was chairman. And, like the conference itself, the commission was primarily a citizen group.

The commission's goals were to bring together library users and potential users, librarians, and library trustees for these purposes:

- to examine people's needs for library services
- to assess the ways in which the libraries of New York State are meeting these needs and may be improved to benefit the people, communities, and economy of the state
- to identify the roles and responsibilities of local, state, and federal governments, of private institutions, and of the private sector
- where appropriate, to forward resolutions to the New York State Legislature for legislative action
- to develop recommendations for the 1979 White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services.

The New York conference was one of the first of 57 state and territorial conferences which precede (and receive partial funding from) the White House Conference. Among the observers were persons from 20 other states and White House Conference planners from Washington, D.C.

Governor Hugh L. Carey welcomed the delegates at the opening session. When the conference adjourned two and a half days later delegates had passed resolutions, elected delegates to the White House Conference, and made plans for major library actions in the state.

# The New York Times Covers the Conference

JUNE 11, 1978 PAGE 49

## NEW YORK LIBRARIANS END POLICY DEBATES

### Convention Defeats Move to Take State Repository Away From the Education Department

By HAROLD FABER
Special to The New York Times

ALBANY, June 8—A proposal that the State Library be removed from the jurisdiction of the State Education Department and set up as a separate agency was defeated this week by delegates to the Governor's Conference on Libraries, which met to chart policies for the future of all libraries in the state.

Its action had a special signficance because of a bill pending in the Legislature that would set up an independent state library, generated in part because of dissatisfaction among some legislators about its efficiency in supplying their needs. The bill is in committee, with no indication that it will be acted on soon.

The three-day conference, planned by the Governor's Commission on Libraries, was attended by 300 delegates, two-thirds of them people with no operational or policy responsibility for libraries and one-third librarians or others connected with libraries. The chairman of the commission is Edwin Newman, the television reporter and author.

The conference's recommendations will be forwarded to the Governor, the Legislature and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Services, which is planning a White House conference on library and information services to be held in October 1979. The Albany conference elected 29 delegates to the White House conference.

**Technology Transition Period**

Both conferences were called at a time when libraries are in a state of technological transition, trying to cope with new tools such as computerized information-retrieval systems and audio-visual devices as well as revised copyright restrictions, questions of raising money for the new, expensive devices and financing in general.

One delegate even presented a proposal to change the name of librarians to "something that would more accurately reflect the changing nature of information services." But the delegate, Bernard G. Fox of Centereach, L.I., had no specific suggestions.

Many delegates scoffed at the idea. Frances D. Clark of Cornwall, who is president of the School Library Media Section of the New York Library Association, said "never, never, never," although she, like most school librarians, bears the official title of "school library media specialist."

In opening the convention, Governor Carey, who once was a trustee of the Brooklyn Public Library, said it would go down in history because it was the first ever to be held in the newly completed Convention Center of the Empire State Plaza.

**Some Convention Decisions**

On the last day of the convention, the delegates voted on issues that have long been of concern to library officials and users.

They defeated a motion to support a fee for research services, voted to extend services to the blind, the handicapped and prisoners; supported "an aggressive program" to increase public support of libraries; defeated a proposal to permit representatives of the public to participate in the selection of books for public libraries, and called for a state law to require the employment of certified library media specialists or library teachers in all elementary and secondary schools.

Perhaps the most controversial issue before the convention was the condition of the 160-year-old State Library, which has just moved from the Education Department Building into a brand-new modernistic Cultural Education Center at the south end of the Empire State Plaza here.

Criticizing fragmented programming to coordinate the "vast information resources" of the state, one resolution proposed that all public library systems in the state be put under an independent state Library Department. It was defeated.

**Preserving Historical Records**

A resolution proposing the strengthening of libraries and services under the Education Department, with additional funds, was passed after it was amended to include a recommended promotion of the State Librarian from being an Assistant Commissioner of Education to Deputy Commissioner.

Criticism of the Department of Education also figured in the closest vote of the convention, on a proposal to remove the state archives from the department. It was proposed from the floor, obviously expressing dissatisfaction with the current system of preserving historical records in the state.

Gordon M. Ambach, the Commissioner of Education, who is also a member of the Governor's Commission and who was a member of the convention's resolutions committee, conceded that the archives had not been handled properly, mostly because of lack of money and manpower. In effect he promised to do better.

Based on his statement, the convention defeated the proposal 93 to 92, and then went on to adopt a resolution supporting an expanded archival program.

american libraries

## The Library Liberals Say "Yes" at New York's White House Preconference

By Art Plotnik

One must not be cynical about state White House preconferences. People try their best, library awareness is raised above the ankles, and, after all, no one ever told us just what these WHCLIS things are supposed to make us feel. On the other hand, why pretend they make us feel nothing? Reading most WHCLIS pre-conference reports, one pictures a gallery of R2D2s beeping once for yes and twice for no on 250 resolutions, and going home.

At the New York State pre-WHCLIS, June 5-7, 274 delegates did vote yes or no on 50 resolutions (narrowed down from 400), but the voters were no robots. Neither were the more than 200 observers chasing the action through Albany's new space-age Empire State Plaza, site of the conference.

That Plaza! Ten sculptured mountains of marble rising from a four-million-square-foot, five-story platform. Framed by the old rococo Capitol building and the majestic new State Library, the Plaza honeycombs thousands of state workers, and in its sheer immensity gives one the feeling that *anything* is possible if enough people can get together on it. Not a bad feeling to underlie what Gov. Hugh Carey called the "best meeting ever held" in the Plaza's prehistorically huge, egg-shaped conference building. (Gov. Carey, in his welcoming address, admitted it was also the first meeting ever held in the "spectacular spheroid.")

But certainly many of the delegates had Plaza-inspired feelings of limitless possibilities. For at the very same time Proposition 13 was causing an economic implosion in California, the New Yorkers resolved to spend just about every last tax dollar in the state for the betterment of libraries.

Delegates called for a state-funded library-awareness media campaign equal to a recent $10-million "I Love New York" campaign of the Commerce Department. They responded to the outcries of a school-library contingent and backed a resolution for certified librarians in every elementary school learning resources center.

They said yes to tax money for nonpublic libraries giving public services without fees; yes to state and federal children's services consultants; yes to more services to prisoners, the blind, and the physically handicapped; yes to more money for the state archives program; yes to upgrading the state librarian; yes to more money for urban libraries; yes to greater support for the Schomburg Collection of black literature and history; yes to legislative bill A 9975/S 8252 for a high-powered state network, $32 million in direct state aid to public libraries, and 50 cents per capita for school library system development (the legislature came up with only some $3 million late in July).

*N.Y. State Gov. Hugh Carey accepts a statewide library card from NYLA President Lucille Thomas at opening ceremonies of the NY/WHCLIS in Albany.*

Yes, said the liberal and generous delegates of New York State, yes, yes, like Molly Bloom, yes, yes, yes to everything! Even when they said no to a dozen out of 44 resolutions (no fees, no citizen book selection, etc.), they were actually saying yes to free and universal library access.

### Who They Were; Why They Came

It was an interesting crowd. Two-thirds—as at all WHCLIS conferences—were nonlibrarians, not all of whom delighted in such resolution rhetoric as "state bibliographic and delivery network to interface with the national library network using computer and telecommunication technologies accessible on-line anywhere." But the citizens fought to understand what they were voting on.

The interest was intense, and points of view from other professions challenged the library segment. One school principal didn't buy the library's aggressive role in literacy training. "This is getting into the teaching function," he argued. The assemblage still said yes to library activity in literacy programs, but other citizens warned against "stretching" cooperation between schools ("teaching stations") and libraries.

No one group seemed to dominate the debates. It was hard to tell the New

*Sharon Brown, citizen delegate from Buffalo, leads a protest during a two-hour serving delay at opening conference meal. She sings, "Here we sit like birds of the wilderness, waiting to be fed."*

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*The Bella Abzug look could be seen among delegates at the Albany conference. Show stealer: delegate David Abraham, 12, of Youngstown.*

York City crowd from the upstaters, who have a long tradition of fighting off downstate dominance. A good number of black citizens took part with gusto, but the Spanish-speaking element was low keyed. Overall, it was democracy at its best and worst. (Some parliamentary wrangles in the name of fair play bordered on contortionism.)

Among the citizen delegates was a young man on a work/education release program from Bayview Correctional Facility in Manhattan. Serving 15 months on a marijuana conviction, Lee Eschen worked as law librarian in another facility, attended a regional WHCLIS meeting in Brooklyn, and, in Albany's WHCLIS, lobbied for two successful resolutions, the first mandating institutional library services with set standards, the second calling for full-fledged institutional libraries under public library supervision.

Several New York State luminaries graced the podium in a three-day conference, but the show stealer was 12-year-old delegate David Abraham of Youngstown, who defended freedom of access for young people with astonishing wit, poise, and forcefulness. On these qualities, Abraham had worked his way up from participation in a school library project to delegate status, and his contribution in Albany was second to none.

All but lost in the liberal crowd was the persistent voice of one Bernard Fryshman, a physicist from Brooklyn who cast a lonely vote against several of the free-access and free-spending resolutions. He was one of only two voting for community participation in public library book selection and "parental permission" for a child's unrestricted use of the public library.

"Sometimes," said Fryshman, who has children of his own, "a library becomes an end in itself rather than a service."

Other citizen delegates and observers came from all walks of life. Many had connections with libraries (even Gov. Carey was once a school library aide); a very few didn't know how they were nominated and what they were doing there. Among 12 citizens elected as national conference delegates were five with background in education and three undergraduate students.

Most conspicuous among the professional delegates was Columbia library school Dean Richard Darling, who goal-tended the microphones to deliver his patented, rising-crescendo arguments in favor of the library freedoms. Darling was elected a national delegate, along with Linda Bretz, Mary Cassata, Dinah Lindauer, Stanley Ransom, Carlton Rochell, Esther Swanker (who coordinated the conference for Carey), and Lucille Thomas.

If the New York pre-WHCLIS is to have impact on the national conference, it will be largely on the strength of these delegates. But at the state level, it was clear that the voice of WHCLIS/NY was heard in the legislature and will be spread through the grassroots. And what did that voice say?

It said, to borrow a few terms from a conference address by the New York Public Library's Richard Couper, libraries need both inspirational and *respirational* freedom. It said libraries are gasping for a chance to do their stuff. And the delegates, in the spirit of their yea-saying, brought forth the oxygen. □

### Portrait of a Citizen Delegate

**Delegate Margaret Graham-Smith** is a news anchor and reporter for Gannett TV, a CBS affiliate in Rochester. No one was paying for her time at the conference, and her desk would be sky-high when she returned. But, with a few reservations, she thought the experience was worth it. Libraries mean much to her—in particular, the Rochester PL, which has supplied background materials for many of her news and feature stories, among them a special on women.

At the conference, Graham-Smith initiated some resolutions calling for freely available archives of cable and public access programs. She feels that if she were ever again to attend this type of conference, she would use the tactic of caucusing to advance her special interests with more clout. But she admitted, "Ultimately these pie-in-the-sky resolutions don't mean much. What counts for me is that I'll be coming away with even greater determination to support local libraries."

# REGENTS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LIBRARIES REPORT TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS CULTURAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

May 24, 1990

Since our May 1989 report, we have pursued the agenda we discussed with you at that time: the Library Systems and Services Study, the problems some library systems have identified in working with their members regarding free direct access regulations, the Governor's and White House Conferences on Library and Information Services, and other developing or ongoing matters.

As New York State moves toward the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services, the immediacy and intensity of interest focusing on the New York State Governor's Conference on Library and Information Services commands the attention of the Regents Advisory Council on Libraries. We anticipate the Conference will serve as another vehicle for the Regents and Council to work together as partners.

First among the governors to commit funds to a state conference, Governor Cuomo has insured that New York State will play a leadership role in the White House conference. The appointments of Richard C. Wade, Chair of the Governor's Commission on Libraries, and Marian Crounse, Conference Director, mean that government leaders, business leaders and the public will hear and harken to the message that only a major investment in information resources and education can guarantee the viability of our State and nation in the 21st century.

We believe this message on the importance of libraries as key educational institutions is your priority, as it is ours. As we reported to you on the work of the Council during the past year, it is apparent that our agenda is directly related to the national conference themes of:

- Library and Information Services for Productivity
- Library and Information Services for Literacy
- Library and Information Services for Democracy

These themes are particularly appropriate for New York State in light of our international economy and the Governor's commitment to economic development; the severe problems our State faces because of illiteracy; and the need for wider participation in government.

## PRODUCTIVITY

As you develop your policy and programs relating to the role of education in strengthening the State's economy and in developing the work force necessary in the 21st century, we hope you will consider these facts:

- Public library job information and education information centers play a critical role in supporting worker training and making contact with adults who need educational services.
- Library-based literacy, English-as-a-second-lan-

## WHAT IS THE REGENTS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LIBRARIES?

The Regents Advisory Council on Libraries (RAC) advises the Education Department and the Regents on policy and programs affecting library services. The oldest continuing advisory body to the Regents, the RAC was established on June 5, 1894, "to serve as a library council with whom the University offers may consult whenever the advice or cooperation of experts may be desirable."

The Board of Regents, the Commissioner of Education and the State Librarian* recognize the RAC as the principal, continuing source of advice to the Department on matters concerning library services and programs. The Council is broadly representative of libraries and statewide constituencies served by the New York State Library. Under State law, the Regents are responsible for the New York State Library and for State policy on libraries as part of their responsibility for education and the University of the State of New York. The RAC advises the Regents on that policy.

*The State Librarian's formal title is "State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner for Libraries."

## WHAT DOES THE REGENTS ADVISORY COUNCIL DO?

The Council meets for an all-day session five times year (in September, November, January, March and May). The Council operates under bylaws. All Council meetings are open to the public and the Education Department Office of Communications announces each meeting.

The Council's principal advisory functions center on recommendations for legislative action and Commissioner's Regulations, reviewing drafts of Department and Regents documents, statements and plans to gauge their impact on libraries, and evaluating and monitoring statewide services and programs. The Council monitors staffing levels in both Divisions of the New York State Library and in the Bureau of School Library Media Program. The Council initiates action, such as the projects to update standards for public and school libraries.

The preparation of the Council's annual report to the Regents Cultural Education Committee furnishes a focus for review and discussion of current issues of concern to the Council, the Regents, and the library field. The report identifies problems and usually recommends specific actions to the Regents.

Although no member of the Council represents a particular organization or library, members of the Council act as informal liaisons to the organizations and constituencies of which they are a part.

**Members who have completed terms on the Council (1979-1990)**

Daniel W. Casey, Tyrone Cannon, John P. Connolly, William Cox, Charles D. Custer, Andrew Geddes, Carol Kearney, Irving L. Kessler, Nancy C. Kranich, Anna Mary Lowery, Bernice MacDonald, Richard Panz, Burton Ramer, Stanley A. Ransom, Carlton C. Rochell, Nina Root, John Rothman, Jean St. Clair, John B. Smith, Lucille C. Thomas, Janet M. Welch, James G. Womack.

guage and skills development programs effectively reach thousands of adults who are unwilling, at this time, to become involved in formal or school-based training programs.

- Libraries, public broadcasting, other education providers and volunteer organizations have great opportunities to extend their services through such video programs as PLUS — Project Literacy U.S.
- Libraries can be effective partners in distance learning, and library systems become more important as people undertake education far from a campus or school.
- The libraries for the blind serve thousands of people who have "paid their dues" — often elderly individuals with disabilities who have paid taxes for many years.
- School library media centers need their school library systems to provide teachers and students with a full range of career and training materials.
- Both the work force and a healthy economy depend upon information and research. Our libraries are needed by both.

We are also concerned about the **productivity of libraries and library systems**. Productivity and cooperation were key elements of the *King* study of library systems. We applaud the Regents leadership in hosting fall meetings in the judicial districts on the King recommendations. Those meetings and the September 1990 SED conference on the systems study will provide positive direction for 1991 legislative proposals.

The study documents that systems do "work." The leadership of the Regents, Department and support of the Legislature and Governor in developing the systems over more than 30 years continues to "pay off." Our challenge now is to see how their mission can be supported, focused and shared better to serve *all* the libraries of New York. Sound planning, careful consideration of King's recommendations and additional resources should enable library systems to repair losses in service experienced in the emergency created by the four-year delay in library aid.

We need to look ahead and be able to serve tomorrow's needs as well as today's. As we affirm this we are aware how urgently the systems need the aid increase you have recommended to serve the people of the State. For example, it is urgent that we:

- reinstate delivery service among libraries in Clinton-Essex-Franklin Public Library system
- a service that was reduced to one day a week;
- reestablish maintenance of the computerized bibliographic database in the Putnam-Northern Westchester BOCES School Library system — which was cut because of lack of funds; and
- restore the branch hours and services to latchkey children in the Brooklyn Public Library.

One of our clear areas of concern continues to be the lack of secure and significant support for the **school library systems**. Systems do "work" but work well only if they have the tools for the task. With minimal funding and skeleton staffs they cannot: **progress** with retrospective conversion of the holdings of their respective members; **provide** database searches for students researching a project; or **promote** interlibrary loan and resource sharing. In effect, the school library systems are being denied the ability to create the effective networks children and their teachers need. They should be growing and giving a breadth of information to a student population that, each day, depends upon a wider array of informational resources rather than a single textbook. But the current fiscal emergency requires school library systems to curtail services, thus isolating students from the library materials they need most.

A recurring concern of the Council is the ability of the Department's library units to meet Regents goals. We are concerned at the paucity of support directed to the **Research Library Division** of the State Library, the **Division of Library Development** and the **Bureau of School Library Media Programs**. The shortage of professional and support staff in the Library, projected retirements and limited resources in the Division and the Bureau, are particularly troubling as we look to the future and our mutual expectations for equity in library services for all the people of the State. Continued erosion of staff and resources jeopardizes the position of the Library as a nationally prominent, major research resource serving government, business and individuals. It likewise jeopardizes the effectiveness of the nation's premier library development office.

**Cooperation between public libraries and schools** can, we believe, foster creative and constructive productivity. Last year, we identified some 58 ways in which schools and public libraries might work more closely together to serve children before and during their formal school years. We offered you our thinking on possibilities for encouraging more effective cooperation. As a result of this work, the Capital Region Teachers Center has brought librarians and other educators together to plan better service to children and young adults. Regents goals will be achieved if there are similar developments across the State.

## LITERACY

Literacy is the avenue to lifelong learning and libraries are truly "all about" literacy. We were pleased to learn this year that the Office of Adult Learning Services will now expect all literacy providers to see that their students get library cards. We embrace the literacy theme in the very broadest sense. Libraries exist to serve the needs of all — whether literate or illiterate, young or old, in good health or coping with a disability.

This year we have studied library services to blind and visually handicapped readers. We applaud Governor Cuomo's focus on the "Decade of the Child." We have a responsibility to cite the role that libraries play in early childhood education, through such services as preschool story hours and parent/child workshops, which foster parenting skills and child development. In the course of the Governor's Conference, we hope the Regents will take the lead in documenting the unique job libraries are doing in adult literacy training and providing job information.

The 1990 Census will surely show that our State's population is both living longer and is more ethnically diverse. We need to think about the library implications of these facts. Without channeled and committed support, the large print books and books-on-tape will not be on the shelves for our **elderly library users**. Although using libraries and participation in library-based **English-as-a-second-language classes** are the means by which thousands of immigrants enter the mainstream of our society, libraries are forced to cut these services, as has occurred this year at the New York Public Library.

Although preliteracy skills for our children begin almost at birth, we are keenly aware that a child's introduction to school and a school library provide a structured setting for learning information skills, and for developing a love of reading.

Aware of the Regents commitment to a **curriculum of inclusion** and the **approach to school reform**, we met in January with Assistant Commissioner Merrick. We did so to learn more about the Education Department's approach to **learner outcomes** and how they might be related to a definition of quality library service programs, resources and staff.

Reliable research shows high correlation between student achievement and full-time library media specialists. We firmly believe there will not be satisfactory outcomes without a library media specialist to teach, provide carefully selected multi-ethnic materials and foster cooperation with the classroom teachers in planning for instruction in every classroom and school library. We question standards for school library media centers, stated exclusively in terms of learner outcomes, and are aware of the age (1928) of our current school library regulations. We urge you to update them. The Regents should make clear to school boards, administrators, educators and the public what library resources are required for effective learning in our schools.

## DEMOCRACY

The daily events in Eastern Europe demonstrate the power of people and ideas. American society has long

recognized the value of education and decade by decade our State and Federal governments have fostered schools and libraries. Participation in a democracy in an electronic environment requires more than ever before that people have and share information. The role of libraries in serving both the government and people of New York State may be one of the most significant aspects of the Governor's Conference.

We have all learned much since 1987, when you encouraged us to launch an updating of **the 1950 standards for public libraries**. We stress the necessity for you to take action on the proposed minimum standards. As you do, you will move us closer to the time when the information needs of *all* residents of New York are met by providing accessible locations, directed by certified specialists, and available during convenient hours of broadly defined service.

The data the Division of Library Development compiled from the 1988 annual state reports from public libraries clearly show that all libraries, especially our smaller libraries, have made significant strides toward meeting the proposed standards. These data show again how important it is for the Regents to take leadership in articulating a vision for the future, and in defining new standards for public libraries as community learning centers and as electronic doorways to information.

On your agenda as on ours, in recent months there has been the widely circulated discussion paper on **direct access**. We were encouraged to learn about the great and thoughtful response to that paper. We were also pleased to learn that these responses indicate fewer instances of problems than were popularly thought — although where problems exist, they are acute. We believe some systems need guidance on how to resolve direct access problems within the context of current regulations, and are prepared to work on alternatives that will address problems without compromising principles of free library service. We look forward to discussing these steps with you because they have far-reaching implications for the delivery of library services to the residents of the State of New York.

As we present the work and concerns of the Council within the context of the over arching themes of the Governor's and White House Conferences, we are keenly aware that the library door to be opened in the 1990s is marked "**ACCESS**." The keys that will open that door are labeled cooperation, determination, dedication and dollars. Libraries must be electronic doorways to information but they cannot fulfill that promise without your help.

Libraries must be full partners in the Technology Network Ties program outlined in your draft, *Long-Range Plan for Technology in Elementary and Secondary Education in New York State, Using Technology to Pursue Excellence in Schools*. The 1987 statewide library automation plan, *Libraries & Technology*, enables libraries to become partners in this collaborative effort. We need your help in fostering cooperation and in making the Legislature and other political leaders aware of a new vision for the library in education. In a fiscal crisis it is tempting to look back at "better days," but we concur that we must look ahead with your priorities for excellence, equity and leadership in service. The library community is mobilized, and we now look to you for leadership and guidance in making libraries the strong educational institutions you want them to be.

## CONCLUSION

The Council sincerely appreciates this opportunity to present concerns that we share. We feel privileged to serve as the oldest continuing advisory body to the Regents. Our work as a council continually reminds us of the diverse and far-reaching responsibilities you carry as Regents and makes us more appreciative of your commitment in supporting libraries as an integral part of lifelong learning.

## THE REGENTS ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LIBRARIES

Zebulon Robbins, *Chairperson*
Elizabeth Manion, *Vice-Chairperson*
Evelyn Brandon
Donald Cloudsley
Helen Flowers
Esther Lopato
Janet Elaine Steiner
Bruni Vergés
Robert Wedgeworth, Jr.

## AN INVITATION...

All persons interested in library service in New York State and in the New York State Library are invited to share their ideas on State policy on libraries with members of the Council. Send them to any member of the Council or to:

Joseph F. Shubert, Secretary
Regents Advisory Council on Libraries
New York State Library
Albany, New York 12230

## COMING IN *The Bookmark*

The next issue of *The Bookmark*, edited by Christine Bain, Associate Librarian in Reference Services at the New York State Library, will focus on law library service. The Fall 1990 issue will focus on "Imagination and the Magic of Books."

RECENT ISSUES

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## SULLIVAN ON A COMPREHENSIVE LIBRARY PROGRAM

The time has come to establish a comprehensive program for library service throughout New York State. We have here in New York many of finest libraries of the world — extensive collections such as those The New York Public Library, specialized resource material such as the medical library at Strong Memorial Hospital at the University of Rochester, excellent university libraries, corporate libraries and law libraries. Yet too many of these libraries are inaccessible to the vast majority of people, either because of purposeful limitations on access, because of distance from the library, because of ignorance of the library's resources, or because of combinations of those and other reasons. But the chief reason for inaccessibility to libraries is the lack of a structure program for providing access....We can have in New York the finest library system in the world, but only if we decide to do it. I am not one of those who says that New York doesn't have to be first and best in everything. If we shouldn't be first, who should?

— *Governing and Financing Libraries in New York State...*, prepared by Edward C. Sullivan (a position paper for the 1978 Governor's Conference on Libraries, March 1978).

## 1990: International Literacy Year

The New York State Library is a primary repository for publications pertaining to the history and development of New York State and would appreciate notification from librarians, authors and historical societies of publications available by purchase or gift. Correspondence should be directed to: Humanities Reference Service, New York State Library, Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230.

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